Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-042 *1 March 1996*

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Islamic Affairs

Islamic Affairs: Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 23 Feb

NC2902124396

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 February edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Writer Lashes Out at Intellectuals' Silence on Atrocities
2. 'Nationalist Powers' Condemn Resolution on Sudan
3. EHRO Reports Government-Led Starvation Campaign Against Detainees' Families
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5. Writer Says Travel to Israel Prohibited by Islam

WRITER LASHES OUT AT INTELLECTUALS' SILENCE ON ATROCITIES

In an 8,000-word article on page 12, Dr. Muhammad 'Abbas lashes out at the nation's intellectuals for keeping silent about the regime's atrocities and glorifying it rather than exposing its failings.

In his opening statement, he says that "the all out defeat has spared no corner of the great homeland from its disgrace." However, he adds, none of the rulers or intellectuals wants to admit his responsibility for the sins he committed against the nation. The writer wants any ruler to stand up and admit that he was responsible for the defeat and announce that he is "stepping down." For instance, he wishes "Hafiz al-Asad would stand up before the entire nation... and record in history... that he was unable to complete what he had started..." But in reality, nothing of the sort happens, he points out.

'Abbas notes that the date for holding the Cairo Book Fair was changed and the duration reduced and that reports on it were "blacked out, perhaps because some people are ashamed or afraid of the possible repercussions in the wake of the elections recent practices and the new laws...."

Referring to President Mubarak's annual meeting with writers and intellectuals at the book fair, he says to the intellectuals: "Your annual get together with his excellency the president at the book fair could have been a carnival of truth, justice, goodness, and aesthetics, a carnival in which you renew allegiance to the honest conscience rather than to the regime.... Your meeting with the president could have represented the point when the nation corrects its course with a daring and free word or an honest and proud stance."

He asks intellectuals if it had occurred to any of them to apologize to the president for not attending the meeting "to protest the continued criminal, crazy, ugly, barbaric, and animal-like torture..., the rigging of the elections..., or the continued police-like approach to ruling the country and the fact that the president's post, and many of the senior government positions, have belonged exclusively to the military for half a century?" He asks whether any of them has the courage to say that "we cannot enter the 21st century when elections are being rigged and human rights are being violated," or that "real terrorism is the rigging of the elections and what is happening to the people held in prisons." He cites a "wise saying" he believes applies to all times and places: "A man who cannot oppose the sultan's shortcomings cannot fight the temptation of the devil."

Stating that intellectuals need to defend not just their ideas, but their pride as well, he quotes a playwrite to describe both intellectuals and the "ruling elite in the Islamic world." The playwrite says: "Do you think that these people represent us or that they are preoccupied with the issue of the conflict with Israel? No. We have a dual problem. Zionism has an extension in the current Arab regime, among those who have surrendered and those who are getting ready to surrender; those who suppress their people and tread on them and those who squander and pillage the country's wealth. They all represent the extension of Zionism into the Arab body. Our predicament is complex and emerging from it requires a complex and hard struggle."

'Abbas finds it disgraceful that "some intellectuals have turned from absolute hostility to the might and barbarism of the western civilization under the banner of Karl Marx and Lenin to absolute hostility to the Islamic civilization under the banner of Clinton and Rabin." He adds that intellectuals "insist on ignoring that Islam is not merely a set of rituals but a code of life." He also says that the "advocates of enlightenment" view European unity as a sign of sublime culture, while they view the advocates of Islamic unity as a sign of "backwardness and terrorism."

He wishes intellectuals would call on President Mubarak to instruct the Egyptian envoy at the United Nations to "reject the embargo on Sudan, even if the accusations about its involvement in the assassination attempt are proved true." According to him, "the accusations were fabricated by western intelligence agencies to strike at Sudan and divide it and hence pave the way for striking at Egypt."

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Addressing intellectuals, 'Abbas says: "You could have been the nation's conscience that returns those who have deviated to the right course, takes revenge on the unjust even if it were Caesar, lays down norms and values that no one can break, and acts as the balance of justice and the safety valve that shields the nation from exploding and the homeland from fragmentation."

He finally states that all he wants is a "presidential decree" that bans torture, writes off the results of the elections and referendums, abolishes emergency laws, releases the freedom to set up parties and issue newspapers, makes lying a crime, enforces the law that puts ministers on trial, commissions the Armed Forces and the nuclear agency to "begin immediately manufacturing nuclear weapons so long as Israel insists on owning it," increases the size of the army, applies the law on illegal gains, and restores respect for ethics.

'NATIONALIST POWERS' CONDEMN RESOLUTION ON SUDAN

A 3,000-word report by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Mun'im and Subhi Buhayri, page 2, examines the views of "national powers" on the "decision to impose an embargo on Sudan."

The report states that those who endorsed the decision "are aware it is a scheme that aims primarily to humiliate and kill the people and overthrow a government that said no to America and all its agents." According to the report, an embargo on Sudan "shakes domestic stability in Egypt and exposes its national security to hazards." The report says "all national powers condemn the UN Security Council resolution which threatens Sudan with an embargo and condemn the Egyptian stance that seeks to step up the implementation of that resolution."

Ijlal Ra'fat, a professor at the African Studies Institute, believes the resolution "will have a negative impact on the Sudanese people and will naturally reflect on Egyptian national security" since it involves a neighboring state.

Ra'fat believes the resolution opens the possibility of "partitioning Sudan into statelets.... which will threaten the sources of the Nile and allow other regional powers to interfere in Sudan."

Dr. Ibrahim Dusuqi Abazah, a professor of civilization, says the resolution is "a criminal act against Muslims." He believes the embargo will be imposed on Sudan because it advocates Islam. He reaffirms that Egyptian national security and the Egyptian people will be the first harmed as a result of an embargo on Sudan.

Dr. 'Atif al-Banna, a law professor at Cairo University, says "the new world order under America's leadership exercises hooliganism against Arab and Muslim states and overlooks Israeli and Serbian crimes."

Dr. al-Banna says that no one can prove Sudan's involvement as long as there is no irrefutable evidence. He calls on the Egyptian government to realize that Sudan's unity is in Egypt's and the Arab's interest and to refrain from interfering in Sudan's internal affairs.

Ambassador Taha al-Farnawani rejects any attempt to impose an embargo on Sudan, since Sudan and Libya represent the strategic depth of Egypt. He adds that partitioning Sudan poses a threat to Egypt's national security.

Al-Farnawani appeals to the Sudanese government to show responsiveness to the international community and hand over the wanted persons.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Ghazali, professor of economics at the Faculty of Politics and Economics, states that what is happening to Sudan "is part of a big scheme started with the first Gulf war between Iraq and Iran and followed by the second Gulf war between Iraq and America." He maintains that international conferences, like those held in Casablanca and Amman, complete the scheme that aims to "restrict the Egyptian role for the sake of Zionists and strike at Sudan."

Al-Ghazali advises the Egyptian government to be far-sighted when it comes to Sudan and to contemplate the probable consequences of an embargo on or partitioning of Sudan. "We should not play into the American and Zionist court by backing these schemes that aim to restrict Egypt's role by imposing a siege on its three neighbors," he says.

The poet Ahmad Fu'ad Najm says that "all Arab states are surrounded either by foreign occupiers or Arab rulers." He adds that the "west is trying to kill everything in the Arab heart through the rulers, who agree to anything that humiliates the people."

Dr. Salah Sadiq, a professor at al-Sadat Academy for Administrative Sciences, reaffirms that Sudan represents Egypt's strategic depth and that Egypt's national security begins in Sudan. He calls on nationalist journalists to "launch a campaign to suspend the implementation of the UN resolution."

Finally, Dr. Zaynab 'Abd-al-'Aziz, professor of civilization, asks why an embargo is not imposed on Israel, which clearly violates UN Security Council resolutions. She stresses the need for a popular stance to resist this double-standard policy that targets Arabs and Muslims alone.

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EHRO REPORTS GOVERNMENT-LED STARVATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST DETAINEES' FAMILIES

An unattributed 3,000-word report on page 6 gives an account of a report "issued last week" by the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, EHRO. The report examines the negative effect of detention on the families of the detained.

According to the report, the State Security Investigations Department "is launching an economic war and imposing a financial siege on the families of the detained, in violation of all heavenly religions and world laws and constitutions."

EHRO says in its report that the "government prevented the families from cashing their breadwinners' salaries. This forced aged mothers and children to work to make up for the absence of the detainees, men the government is refusing to release despite court rulings."

The paper publishes long sections of the EHRO report, citing individual cases.

FORTY-SIX MUSLIM BROTHERS ARRESTED IN 'NEW CAMPAIGN'

An unattributed 500-word report on page 1 says: "The State Security Investigation Bureau's branches in al-Fayyum, Giza, and Cairo launched a new campaign before 'Id al-Fitr against the Muslim Brothers and arrested 46 of them, alleging that they were in possession of leaflets that incite antipathy against the regime and arouse the masses during 'Id prayers."

The report notes that the arrested Muslim Brothers were remanded in custody for 15 days pending investigations.

According to the report, the arrested individuals denied the charges and the defense panel demanded their release.

The report says Muslim Brotherhood sources have described the new campaign as "a new link in the chain of attempts to distort the group's image and arrest their leading cadres" "to insinuate that they have links with the other groups that resort to violence."

WRITER SAYS TRAVEL TO ISRAEL PROHIBITED BY ISLAM

A 2,000-word article by Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi on page 3 says that "travelling to the Zionist enemy's state for tourism is prohibited by shari'ah".

The writer begins by pointing out that Islam makes it the duty of Muslims to expend their money and lives in jihad to restore their usurped land and that it does not allow them to relinquish an inch of the "land of Islam" usurped from them by what he calls a vile, atheist aggressor. If this applies to any part of the land of Islam, he asks, then what if that part is the land of the "Night Journey and Ascension," the land that hosts the al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two Qiblahs in Islam? "This emphasizes the inevitability of jihad for the sake of God and the oppressed men, women, and children," he says, adding that if Muslims fail to defend their homeland for some reason, their religion makes it their duty to boycott their enemy economically, socially, and culturally for various reasons.

Enumerating these reasons, he says that this boycott is the only available weapon and that staging transactions with enemies strengthens the enemies' economy and gives them the ability to continue their "aggression," which is prohibited as a form of "collaboration in sin and aggression."

The third reason he enumerates is that receiving the enemies at home "breaks the psychological barrier between us and weakens people's enthusiasm for jihad." The fourth reason is that mixing with the enemies "threatens our Arab and Muslim communities with corruption, vice, and promiscuity" and spreads fatal ailments like AIDS.

He thus concludes that travelling to Israel is prohibited by Islamic law.

Al-Qaradawi says he believes that claims that peace has taken the place of a conflict with Israel are untrue while Jerusalem remains occupied.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Offers Israel Cease-Fire Proposal

TA2902201796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] is offering Israel a cease-fire. A statement Hamas published this evening through REUTER says that the organization is offering to stop suicide terror attacks against Israeli civilians if Israel stops its activities against Hamas and its military arm, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam. Hamas demands that Israel stop its offensive against Palestinian citizens and release all the organization's prisoners. Hamas stated 8 March as a deadline for Israel to answer the offer.

Palestinian sources have noted that this is the first time that such an offer has been made by both the Hamas political and military arms.

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Palestinian Affairs: Official Comments on Hamas' Cease-Fire Proposal

JN0103120596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 1 Mar 96

[From the "With the Midday Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency [in the Palestinian Authority], says that he heard about the statement from Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] [reference to Hamas' proposal for suspension of operations against Israel] while he was in Cairo yesterday, where President Mubarak met with Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority [PA].

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahim recording] We learned about Hamas' announcement during negotiations in Cairo. This position is not new. Hamas is ready, as they told us in Cairo, to halt the jihad in return for the release of Hamas prisoners. I believe this is strange. Why do they call for releasing only Hamas prisoners? What is the reason for this selfishness? There are prisoners from all segments of Palestinian society. The PA does not differentiate among the prisoners of Hamas, Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

This statement, of course, was issued abroad. I do not know if this is a call from the leadership of the Hamas Movement for negotiating with the Israeli Government or not. I heard in your program this morning that Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says that he will negotiate only with the PA. I would like to comment on the foreign minister's statements. We reject the presence of militias in the National Authority's areas. There is only one authority with the right to carry arms. This stand has been known by Israeli officials for a long time. We reject a state comprised of militias. We refuse to be a Somalia or an Afghanistan. When certain factions demanded that their weapons be licensed, we told them that we do not license weapons for factions, but rather for individuals. There are two types of licenses, the first is for home use — in this case, one is not allowed to carry his weapon outside his house — and their is a license for carrying weapons. There are restrictions on this license. We know that the West Bank is full of weapons. This is a problem that we have begun to address. We reject armed militias or an authority within the authority. This is not an Israeli demand; it is something we demand. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Letter Refutes 'Lies' About Dialogue With Israel

MM0103112696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Mar 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Hamas Denies Any Dialogue With Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) stressed in a letter faxed to AL-HAYAH's chief editor yesterday that what Palestinian Authority sources had said to AL-HAYAH about a dialogue between Hamas and Israel is untrue.

Referring to what AL-HAYAH published yesterday, Thursday 29 February, Hamas' letter said: "The suicide operations carried out by our mujahidin of the Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions tend to be followed by a media campaign, launched by Zionist and other quarters, with a view to distorting the movement's stands in a bid to extricate these quarters from the political and security dilemma that normally results from out heroic operations. Thus it was no surprise in the wake of the Jerusalem and Ashqelon suicide operations last Sunday, 25 February, when the campaign against Hamas experienced a marked upsurge because of the political shadows these operations have cast in the Zionist political atmosphere, represented in lies and allegations about the existence of a dialogue between Hamas — specifically Hamas abroad — and the Zionist entity."

The letter added that "we in Hamas stress that these allegations are absolutely baseless, since Hamas' position of refusing to negotiate with the occupation authorities is clear and nothing has occurred to prompt Hamas to change or reconsider this position."

The letter says that reports of a dialogue between it and Israel are "part of the false rumors and statements that some circles in the occupation authorities and the self-rule Authority are trying to promote with a view to distorting the movement's stands and trying to cast doubt on its credibility, harm its popularity, or incite people against it."

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas' Ghawshah Denies Knowledge of 'Truce' Plan

MM0103104796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Mufid 'Awwad: "Ghawshah: Hamas Not Fond of Bloodshed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for Hamas, has stressed

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that his movement is not fond of bloodshed, but it is fighting to defend its people. Ghawshah said that Hamas urges everyone "to exert pressure on the Zionists to compel them to stop killing innocent people, and to exert pressure on the Zionist entity's leaders to force them to halt the campaigns of murder and repression staged against unarmed mujahidin in the self-rule areas."

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, the first since the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations, Ghawshah criticized statements made to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT by a Hamas official in Ramallah in the West Bank about a truce plan between Hamas and Israel. Ghawshah said: "I am the only one authorized to speak in Hamas' name. The movement has assigned no one [else] to speak on its behalf." Ghawshah denied any knowledge of the existence of a so-called truce plan between Hamas and the Zionist enemy. He warned against departing from Hamas' constants and the idea of some people volunteering from time to time to make irresponsible statements to media services.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Sources Link Suicide Operations With Hamas Abroad

MM2902201896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Husayn Hijazi in Gaza: "Palestinian Authority Sources Link Sunday's Two Operations to 'Dialogue' Between Israel and Hamas Leadership Abroad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian sources have revealed to AL-HAYAH that, during their recent meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres informed Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat that a dialogue is taking place between the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Israel. This matter caused a great deal of surprise to the Palestinian side, which subsequently learned that the remark was about a dialogue with the Hamas leadership abroad. The sources wondered what could have happened in this dialogue to make Hamas abroad resume its suicide operations, such as the ones in Jerusalem and Ashqelon last Sunday; retaliation for Yahia 'Ayyash's assassination was not the motive behind Hamas's two recent operations because, if that had been the reason, it would have carried them out soon after 'Ayyash's assassination and would not have waited this long.

The same sources pointed out that "the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions", Hamas's military wing in Gaza, and the Hamas movement in the territories as a whole had made a commitment to the Palestinian Authority [PA] during the Cairo dialogue to put an end to armed action in exchange for the release of its prisoners.

The sources mentioned the statement issued by the "al-Qassam Battalions" the day before yesterday denying any responsibility for Sunday's operation, and raised some questions with regard to the circumstances leading to last Sunday's operation, which the sources attributed to factors and circumstances concerning basically, and for the first time, the outcome of the dialogue between Hamas and Israel, resulting apparently in an attempt by the Hamas leadership abroad to exert pressure on Israel for some reason unknown to the sources.

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, the PA's secretary general, told AL- HAYAH that the PA "links the announcement of this operation from abroad and its being carried out from Hebron, and the Hebron settlers being seriously intent on wrecking the redeployment process in the city scheduled for next month." He added that, from beginning to end, this operation raises questions, since Hamas and the Battalions had made a serious commitment to the PA to halt operations. During the last seven months they have adhered to their commitment and are still respecting this pledge, in a reference to the al-Qassam Battalions's recent statement in Gaza reaffirming the Battalions's commitment to their pledge. 'Abd-al-Rahim revealed to AL-HAYAH that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had told Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator for Middle East affairs, in a telephone conversation he had with 'Arafat, that the United States should not head for the wrong address, because the Hamas which orders these operations is not in the PA's areas but abroad.

Meanwhile, several Palestinian officials have continued to criticize the way that Israel, by directing the blame mainly at the PA, is trying to respond to Sunday's incidents. Dr. Nabil Sha'th, the former planning and cooperation minister, expressed this view, telling AL-HAYAH that "despite our condemnation of this action which we consider an ugly crime, the Israelis are unfortunately always blaming us, so as to avoid their responsibilities." He said that this behavior "is no longer acceptable, aside from the fact they were the ones who stirred up all these things by their stupid policies," in a reference to Yahia 'Ayyash's assassination.

Palestinian Affairs: Orient House Making Preparing on Arab Property in West Jerusalem

TA2902162896 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 p 5

[Report by 'Ofer Petersburg and Itamar Eichner]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian Authority has drafted a detailed map denoting Arab land and property inside the pre-1948 city limits of western Jerusalem. The map is accompanied by ownership documents for

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some 3,000 buildings, of 5,700 claimed to be Arab property, in central Jerusalem. The documents will serve the Palestinians as bargaining chips in the talks on the future of Jerusalem in the permanent arrangement.

Thousands of Jewish apartment owners may suddenly find their property on the list of Palestinian claims. YEDI'OT AHARONOT came across a map, drawn at Orient House, which marks the assets and lands that Palestinians own in the small-scale western Jerusalem.

The PA has a thick file, called Jerusalem-West, which holds documents of 3,000 assets in western Jerusalem, that include documents from the Land Registry Office and City Hall dating back to the British Mandate. This file is also expected to be presented during the discussions.

The file has been compiled over months, with the documents being collected from East Jerusalem residents, refugees in Jordan, and Palestinians who currently reside in the United States. The list includes buildings that have become an inseparable part of the city.

Following are the buildings in western Jerusalem that the Palestinians claim they own: the villa of the Belgian Embassy in Qatamon; the Hanna Sinyurah House in Baqa'a, today owned by 'Amidar; Turjman Gallery, facing the YMCA building; the Agriculture Ministry building near the King David Hotel; the Bank Hapoalim branch on Ben-Yehuda Street; the Terra Santa Building, currently used by Hebrew University, near the prime minister's residence; the Sensor building on the Ben-Yehuda pedestrian mall, owned by the Hakhsharat Hayishuv Company; a building that serves today as a day care center for retarded children; a building the Tarhi family abandoned in Baqa'a, where today Jews live; a similar building abandoned by the Namiri family; an Arab building next to the Jerusalem Theater, which belongs to the Sinyurah family; the 'Adi Building at 24 Kaf Tet Benovember Street, where today photographer David Rubinger lives; an orphanage on Yehuda corner of Hebron Street, and more.

Faysal al-Husayni, in charge of Jerusalem issues, is behind the campaign. The aim is to construct an authorized file that could stand in an international court and be used as a lever to pressure Israel into further concessions in East Jerusalem. Experts believe that the claims might reach hundreds of millions, perhaps even billions of dollars. According to their data, the Palestinians possessed some 70 percent of the land of western Jerusalem prior to 1948, including some 5,700 buildings.

Khalil Tufakji, a Palestinian city planner, head of the map department and a senior Orient House activist, stands behind the collection of documents. According to him, the number of building owners who hold all the documents — including pictures of the house, building permits from the various authorities, and Land Registry Office documents — is staggering. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns Home After Talks With Egyptian Officials

JN2902202296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned home from the Egyptian capital this evening. During his visit to Cairo, he met with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

Talks between the two presidents dealt with the latest developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track in light of the recent events as well as the difficult economic situation in the Palestinian territories as a result of the siege imposed by the Israeli authorities.

The two presidents also discussed the recent developments of the Middle East peace process in general and its various tracks. Afterward, the two presidents held an expanded session of talks. The session was attended on the Palestinian side by a number of National Authority officials and on the Egyptian side by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; and Usamah al-Baz, first under secretary of the Foreign Ministry and head of the Egyptian President's Office for Political Affairs.

'Arafat also met with Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri this afternoon. They discussed the negative economic effects of the Israeli military siege imposed on the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Meets U.S. Consul in Gaza 1 Mar

JN0103125796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat received U.S. Consul Edward Abington at the Presidency in Gaza at noon today. They discussed the latest developments in the peace process against the background of the military siege clamped on the Palestinian territories.

President 'Arafat performed the Friday prayers at the al-'Abbas Mosque in Gaza today. Mosque preacher Shaykh Muhammad Qusa stressed the need to build a conscientious civilian community in Palestine.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat Briefs European, U.S. Consuls on Closure

JN2902210696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Legislative Council member Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat has called on Israel to stop its attempts to undermine the peace process and not to use the policy of strangulation and collective punishment for political and electoral purposes.

During his meeting with the European Union [EU] consuls and EU Commissioner General (Thomas Dobla), at the Ministry of Local Government in Jericho this afternoon, Dr. 'Urayqat pointed out that as a result of this policy the Israeli parties want to send a message to the Israeli voters on what party is most capable of repressing the Palestinian people.

'Urayqat added that his meeting with the European officials was held at the directives and recommendations of President Yasir 'Arafat in order to explain the National Authority's rejection of collective punishment and economic siege.

'Urayqat also notified the European consuls of President 'Arafat's request that their states intervene in order to rescue the peace process, so that the Palestinian people will not be a victim to the Israeli policy.

Dr. 'Urayqat also met with the U.S. consul-general and briefed him on the recent developments in the region and the National Authority's position on the Israeli policy of imposing a military siege on the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Receives Letter From Germany's Kinkel

JN0103073396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said he is happy with His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat's firm announcement that terrorist attacks are directed against the peace process.

In a letter to 'Arafat Presidency Secretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim received from Germany's representative to the National Authority [NA], Kinkel said that President 'Arafat's winning the elections shows that the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people support the policy of peace and coexistence with Israel and that the Palestinians reject terrorism and violence.

'Abd-al-Rahim explained to the German representative that the NA is committed to agreements and is eager to fulfill its obligations. He noted that President 'Arafat and the NA condemned the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations immediately after they took place.

The presidency secretary general said that these operations are not within the NA jurisdiction as the two operations were carried out on land over which the NA has no authority, whether in Jerusalem, Hebron, or Ashqelon.

Palestinian Affairs: Court Rejects All 7 Appeals Against Election Results

TA0103120196 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 1 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Hagay Huberman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian appeals court on the West Bank elections, which completed its work this week, rejected all seven appeals without hearing evidence or plaintiffs.

The court, which is located in Ramallah, also passed the ruling in principle that the Central Elections Committee [CEC] cannot be sued.

The written decision on the last two appeals was due to have been published yesterday, but has still not been issued. These two appeals were presented separately to the Ramallah court, one by the Peoples' Party in the Hebron region and the second by a coalition of 21 candidates from the Ramallah region. They charged that since the Palestinian Election Law was violated it warranted new elections in these areas. In an oral ruling handed down on 26 February, the three judges rejected the appeals based on precedents set by the Jordanian Supreme Court in reference to Law No. 24 of 1960, that the body in charge of running elections — in this case the CEC — cannot be sued.

A representative of Peace Watch was present in the courtroom during the reading of the ruling and then interviewed one of the judges. The Jordanian law, the judges ruled, permits the presentation of appeals only against candidates who win. Since all the appeals were presented against the CEC, the court ruled that they are invalid. The court also ruled that the candidates will not be able to reissue their appeals against the winning candidates and therefore its ruling is final. According to the judge's remarks, that principle also holds for appeals presented by candidates from Janin, Jericho, and Tulkarm.

In their ruling, the judges acted contrary to the law which served as the basis for the Palestinian elections, the Palestinian Election Law 1995, which was published by the PLO and the Palestinian Authority on 7 December 1995. [passage omitted]

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Palestinian Affairs: Qaddumi Says 'Completely Recovered,' Undergoing Tests

TA2902144196 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-AYYAM — Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department and member of the Fatah Central Committee, has asserted that he is in good health and that he will leave the hospital after undergoing the necessary medical tests.

In a statement to AL-AYYAM from the hospital in Tunis where he was admitted two days ago, Abu-al-Lutf [Qaddumi] said that he canceled his trip to Cairo yesterday morning after experiencing pain and that, consequently, his doctor advised him to enter the hospital.

Abu-al-Lutf noted that his stay in the hospital was just a precaution and that he had completely recovered.

The head of the PLO Political Department is expected to resume his duties in the next few days.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Maryland Talks Continue; Syrians Avoid Denouncing Attacks

TA0103073096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli-Syrian talks are continuing in Maryland. We have learned that the Syrians avoided denouncing the latest terrorist attacks in Israel. Hayim Zissowitz reports from Washington:

[Begin Zissowitz recording] The little that has been reported about what is happening at Wye Plantation says that the only issue the delegations have so far discussed is security arrangements, and that the delegations have still not reached agreement on that. Economic issues might be raised next week. The reports also refer to a good atmosphere between the two sides although the Syrians have avoided denouncing the Jerusalem and Ashqelon terrorist attacks.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 1 March in a page 2 report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef in Maryland, adds that al-Mu'allim yesterday once again "rejected the demand for an Israeli presence in the early warning stations on the Golan Heights after a withdrawal." Sources in Washington say the Syrians "still insist on equality and parity in the demilitarization and parity in the security arrangements."]

A source in the Israeli delegation said yesterday with satisfaction that Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian delegation, expressed regret over the bombings and even pointed the Israelis to a SYRIAN TIMES article, but it appears that there was no clear-cut and unequivocal denunciation. A source close to the talks said that from al-Mu'allim's remarks an expression of sorrow can be understood but definitely no denunciation. The newspaper article also does not contain an outright denunciation of the attacks by Damascus, only a statement condemning the bombings. [end recording]

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Algeria

Algeria: FLN Elects New Politburo; Reformists Said in Majority

LD2902141896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The central committee of the National Liberation Front [FLN] is continuing its proceedings behind closed doors for the second day running. The most important event of this session has been the election of the new political bureau. Our colleague, Hocine Bourada, who has just returned from El Djazair Hotel where the meeting is taking place, has this report for us:

[Bourada] The proceedings of the ordinary session of the FLN central committee continued at El Djazair Hotel in the capital today behind closed doors. On this second day, the committees in charge of preparing the forthcoming congress presented their reports for discussion. The date of the 7th Congress will be set today and the policy statement will also be discussed today. The statement will include the FLN's stance toward the Rome Contract.

Very late in the night the members of the FLN central committee elected the members of the new political bureau in a secret ballot. Forty-five candidates contested the 15 seats of the political bureau. The results of the elections led to the division of the seats of the political bureau into four regions. The central region obtained three seats, two of which went to Karim Younes, a former member of the political bureau, and Mohamed Guenifed, equipment minister in the government of former prime minister Mouloud Hamrouche [who leads the reformist group].

The southern region obtained four seats. One of the best-known figures is Abdelaziz Belkhadem, speaker of the [now defunct] National People's Assembly and a former member of the political bureau.

The western region also obtained four seats. The best-known figures include Omar Tou, a former member of the National People's Assembly.

Four seats also went to the eastern region. Ali Benflis, former justice minister and a former member of the political bureau, and Abderrahmane Belayat, who occupied the post of housing minister in a former government, won with a majority of votes.

According to some sources, the composition of the political bureau shows that the majority of the seats has gone to the reformists. Other members of the central committee say that the two groups are neck and neck, while others reject the idea of reformists and conservatives within the party.

According to the assessment made by some members of the central committee, on the strength of the composition of the political bureau, the line of change, reform, and adherence to the path has triumphed in this ordinary session of the Central Committee.

It is worth mentioning that before the start of the ordinary session, FLN Secretary General Boualem Benhamouda had met the secretaries of the Mouhafadat [provincial bureaus of the party] who reaffirmed their readiness for the 7th Congress on any date to be set by the party.

Algeria: Unions Call For More Strikes Against Salary Dockage

LD0103101796 Paris Radio France International in French 0900 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, the General Union of Algerian Workers has decided to organize more strikes to protest against the dockage of salaries in the public sector [in order to pay salary arrears of 200,000 workers in the same sector]. The last strike was a success.

Libya

Libya: LDPR Leader Zhirinovskiy Arrives From Russia

LD2902212896 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR], and his accompanying delegation arrived in Tripoli this evening for a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. He was welcomed by the secretary for foreign affairs at the General People's Congress. [passage omitted]

Sudan

Sudan: Paper Accuses Egypt of Inciting Sudanese War With Ethiopia

NC2902174096 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 25 Feb 96 p 9

[From "The Brothers' Page"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The weekly newspaper AL-NASR, mouthpiece of the Sudanese Army, has accused Egypt of trying to provoke a war between Sudan and Ethiopia. Citing a Sudanese source that it did not identify, the paper said that the Egyptian regime is inciting the two countries to war. It maintained that Cairo was behind the leaflets distributed by the Ethiopian opposition in Khartoum calling for mutiny against the Ethiopian Government.

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The relations between Sudan and Ethiopia have been at a low point since the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995.

Sudan: 'Majority' of Sudanese Deported by Libya Return Home

NC2902174296 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 25 Feb 96 p 9

[From "The Brothers" page]

[FBIS Translated Text] Taj-al-Din al-Mahdi, head of the Sudanese Immigration Office, has announced that the majority of the 300,000 Sudanese nationals whom Libya decided to deport have returned home and that traffic at the crossing points at the two countries' borders has lessened.

Al-Mahdi said that Sudan has started to impose restrictions on Sudanese travelling to Libya. He added that these travelers will not get exit visas unless they meet the conditions set by the two countries, including the requirement that Sudanese must obtain a residence permit and work permit.

Western Sahara

Western Sahara: Abdelaziz Calls For Negotiations With Morocco

BR2902125296 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 29 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Pilar Marcos: "Saharans Call For Negotiations With Moroccan Government Following 20 Years' Exile"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tinduf — Saharan Democratic Arab Republic President Mohamed Abdelaziz took advantage Tuesday of the commemoration of his first 20 years of exile in an inhospitable corner of the Algerian desert to call openly for negotiations with Morocco. Bachir Mustafa Sayed [name as published], his "number two," went further. He said that "a powerful country which is a permanent Security Council member" — he meant the United States — is pressing Morocco to sit down and negotiate.

But if there is no dialogue, the Saharans reiterate their threat of war, with something new. They say that Morocco is concentrating crack troops in the southeastern "corner" of its border (not counting the disputed Western Sahara), opposite "the most sensitive part of the Algerian border." They intimate that this pleases Algeria as little as it does the Saharans.

"We call on the Moroccan Government to open direct negotiations with us as soon as possible," Abdelaziz stated Tuesday on the esplanade of the "wilaya" (province) of Smara, where the Saharans paraded their troops, their children, and representatives of their offices, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary.

The early deadline — the latest following a great many postponements — has been set by the United Nations for the end of May. Afterward, Minurso (UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) will leave. Will there be no further postponement? The chairman of the Minurso's identification commission for the referendum, the Netherlands' Van Der Kloert, deems it unlikely. "The UN threat of withdrawal is more serious this time," Van Der Kloert replies. Their is a weighty reason. Minurso is spending $3 million (around 375 million pesetas) per month on trying to organize a referendum which seems increasingly unlikely.

Since last November, the eight voter identification centers have been closed. The Minurso chief says that the Saharans have blocked the registration because they do not recognize the three tribes which the Moroccans wish to include in the electoral register. The Saharans, through their coordinator with Minurso, reply that they are only demanding that those identified so far be made public, which is a UN pledge, and that if Morocco refuses, it will be "because either they harbor bad intentions or they know everything." And the days continue to pass slowly in the Algerian "hamada;" a stony desert where the Saharans live mainly on international aid.

What will happen if Minurso carries out its threat and withdraws in June or soon afterward? It will be war, according to any Saharan able to strike up a conversation in Spanish. People young and old carrying their Kalashnikovs paraded Tuesday to demonstrate that readiness for war.

No uniform was left without a soldier. First, some 2,500 men of all ages and with some difficulty in keeping up a martial pace marched past. They were followed by the women — around 150 — with packs for communications which seem impossible from this corner of the world. Some 400 young men of military appearance wound up the display of the Saharan infantry. Behind them came 25 all-purpose vehicles, 20 tanks, 10 armored vehicles, and 30 antiaircraft guns of the Saharan Army.

Abdelaziz described his troops as a "modern army with combat experience and spirit of self-sacrifice, which will enable it to defend and restore the Saharan people's rights." The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro [Polisario] is showing its weapons to remind people that the cease-fire has been a fact since 1991, but that in the future, as before that date, they can damage the Moroccan Army considerably.

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The Saharan Republic has introduced its currency — the Saharan peseta — on the occasion of this anniversary. It has a president, government, troops, prisoners, but no territory or means of survival. They inhabit a corner of the Algerian desert close to the former Spanish colony of the Sahara, to which they lay claim. They live off the contributions of humanitarian organizations, many of them Spanish, and their pride. Tuesday was their 20th anniversary; whether of existence or subsistence remains to be seen.

Western Sahara: President Urges Morocco To Hold Direct Peace Talks

LD2902150896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Numerous foreign delegations and governmental and non-governmental organizations attended the celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Saharan Arab Republic [country name as heard]. Algeria was represented by War Veterans Minister Mohamed Said Abadou.

On the occasion, Mr. Mohamed Abdelaziz, president of the Saharan Arab Republic, delivered a speech in which he affirmed the desire of the Saharan authorities to open direct talks between Saharan officials and the Moroccan authorities with a view to reaching a final solution to the conflict in the region. In this respect, Mr. Mohamed Abdelaziz had this to say:

[Begin Abdelaziz recording] I would like to point out that world public opinion is still astonished by the Moroccan Government's rejection of the continuous appeals calling for unconditional political talks between the Saharan and Moroccan Governments. This appeal, which stems from realism and a spirit of responsibility, is justified and backed by the numerous experiences of modern history in which direct talks were the inevitable outcome and the compulsory path through which conflicts are solved. Through responsible talks, warring sides reached peaceful settlements in Namibia, South Africa, Algeria, the Middle East, and many other parts of the world. Why does the Western Sahara remain an exception to the aforementioned?

Therefore, brothers and sisters, and out of our conviction about this fact, we call on the Moroccan Government to enter political talks with us as soon as possible, for these talks will enable all of us to spare the region the risk of renewed war and destruction. [end recording]

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Kuwait

Kuwait: Kuwait To Reinforce Border With Iraq

JN0103123296 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 17 Feb 96 pp 1, 8

[Report by Salim al-Wawan; "Special to the Arab Times"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, Feb 16: Kuwait said on Friday [16 February] it will reinforce its borders with Iraq to stop recent incidents of illegal crossovers into the country.

His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah told citizens at a local al-Diwaniyah that the government will implement a tight plan in this connection.

"The plan will include installation of electronic devices, floodlights, and boosting the number of security patrols along the borders," Shaykh Sa'd said.

He added that infiltration incidents by Iraqis into Kuwait through the 200-km long borders can be reduced to the minimum, but it cannot be completely eliminated.

However, Shaykh Sa'd affirmed that the planned measures will greatly reduce the number of infiltration.

The latest infiltration incident took place last week when five Iraqis crossed the border into the Demilitarized Zone and attacked a farm owned by a Kuwaiti citizen.

The number of infiltration incidents picked up during the last two months and Kuwaiti security forces arrested many Iraqis as a result.

Commenting on the ongoing contacts between Kuwait and Jordan to normalise relations, Shaykh Sa'd said that he exchanged messages with Jordan's Crown Prince because of the good intentions. He affirmed that Kuwait always works with good intentions.

In a related development, Shaykh Sa'd is reported to have promised a group of former residents of Faylakah Island that he would facilitate their return to the currently deserted island.

Faylakah, once the only populated Kuwaiti island, was deserted as a result of the Iraqi invasion.

Oman

Omani Economic Plan Focuses on Non-Oil Sectors

96LH0089A Muscat 'UMAN in Arabic 6 Jan 96 p 5

[Article by 'Awad Ibn Sa'id Baqwir]

[FBIS Translated Text] The 1996-2000 Five-Year Plan, the main points of which were published recently, contains many controls and provisions to eliminate the deficit during the 1996-2000 plan. The plan also focuses on supporting the development of human resources, diversifying into non-oil income sources, supporting the private sector, and maintaining an acceptable level of development in view of economic variables that cannot be ignored. The plan will attempt to realize some of the state's ambitions, but not all of them given the state's desire — as indicated by figures and statements made by senior officials — to reduce the public debt by gradually eliminating the deficit during the years covered by the plan, until revenues and expenditures are truly balanced by the year 2000.

In this initial reading of the plan, we will focus on the following four main points of the plan:

- elimination of the deficit by 2000;
- development of human resources;
- diversification of income sources;
- support of the private sector.

Elimination of the Budget Deficit by 2000

Following spending for development in previous years and the completion of infrastructure works in most of the cities of the sultanate's local administrative divisions, the government is apparently signalling to start of efforts to eliminate a major, concern of all economies, especially those of the developing countries: the foreign debt.

The sultanate's public debt is 1500 million Omani riyals, as stated by his excellency the minister of state for development affairs at a news conference he held last Thursday morning at the Press Club. His excellency believes that the debt is under control. Nonetheless, annual debt servicing, at 120 million riyals during the 1996-2000 plan, is a burden on the national economy that cannot be ignored. The gradual reduction of the deficit between 1996 and 2000 has thus become a vital goal in the government's Five-Year Plan.

Reduction of the budget deficit no doubt deserves concern. Even if doing so means reducing current expenditures, especially for the nondefense sector, the final elimination of the deficit is nonetheless considered essential. Some of the negative effects of efforts to balance the budget will therefore have to be tolerated. Because ultimately, it is more important for the national economy to be rid of the burden of this deficit. We will see the most immediate result with foreign loans, which entail significant outlays for interest and debt servicing payments. Therefore, achieving a balance between revenue and expenditure is the most important pivot of the plan.

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This year's budget deficit totals 218 million riyals. The budget deficit will fall to 147 million riyals in 1997, 86 million riyals in 1998, 78 million riyals in 1999, and zero by the start of 2000.

The next five years will be a transitional stage in which to prepare a climate for economic upturn, based on a greater role for the private sector, emphasis on the development of human capital, and the elimination of debt burdens and interest.

Development of Human Capital a National Need

This new stage requires a greater focus on the development of human resources. Improved training and better qualified human resources will enhance the economic upturn by providing trained Omani cadres for the labor market and thus allow for a gradual reduction of the foreign labor force. It will also create a balance between the private and public sectors. Hence, a primary focus of the plan is the development of our human resources and the upgrading of our national cadres' capabilities and skills to keep pace with technological development and various changes.

More than 0.5 million citizens fall within the public education age group, and thousands attend Sultan Qabus University as well as specialized technological, agricultural, commercial, and banking colleges. We need an ambitious national plan to develop this potential for entry into the labor force and integration of the country's general economic activity.

Real development lies in skilled labor. This assumption, which has been confirmed by the large number of countries that have developed ambitious plans for the coming years, is a determining factor in the plan's vision for Oman's economic future.

The appropriation of 272 million Omani riyals for a human resource development program during the Five-Year Plan augers well for the preparation of Omani youth for the coming stage, with all of its changes and challenges, so that Omani society can ultimately depend on its own natural and human resources. Oman's human capital has thus become the focus of a major surge of concern, represented by appropriations to develop and guide these human resources — equipped with the necessary information and technological knowledge — toward effective participation in the development of their country.

Hence, human development is a primary pillar of the plan.

Diversification of Revenue Sources

The revenue source diversification policy was initiated years ago. Its goal is to avoid reliance on a single income source such as oil. Hence, efforts have been initiated to strengthen and stimulate the agricultural, fishing, livestock, and industrial sectors. A key element of the plan is support for these sectors. Support for industry, tourism, agriculture, and fishing in the coming stage will boost the income of these sectors and increase their share of the GDP. In this way, oil will ultimately account for only a minor percentage of the GDP. This is the plan's intent.

Despite being established only a few years ago, the industrial sector has come to play a vital role in the national economy. The establishment of numerous industrial zones in the country and an increase in domestic and foreign investment activity could be a strong force for developing the industrial sector into the national economy's most important branch.

Also, the fishing, livestock, and agriculture sectors have great potential. The private sector has a role in investing in these areas. Work has begun in some industrial areas on the establishment of plants for processing agricultural, fishing, and livestock products. Tourism can provide another important resource for the national economy given the tourist and natural attractions which the sultanate offers year round.

Oil prices are fluctuating and unstable. They depend on the varying policies of other OPEC countries. Thus, the plan's support of non-oil sectors is a sound policy.

Support for the Private Sector and Its Anticipated Role

The private sector has an essential role in shouldering the responsibilities for this stage. The government's ongoing support of the private sector may indicate that the state is betting on the private sector's ability to complement the state's development efforts. Moves made by the government to sell off some of its assets to the private sector may provide an important boost to the role of firms and corporations in the management of large projects. The state's Five-Year Plan encourages the establishment of a vigorous, competitive private sector. The plan also supports mechanisms and enterprises that strengthen the vision, strategies, and policies shared by the private sector and the government.

The Five-Year Plan covering 1996-2000 has clearly defined approaches. It attempts as much as possible to create suitable options and maintain the flow of development activity while gradually eliminating the deficit over the next five years. Preliminary estimates placing

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the price of oil at $15 per barrel are considered reasonable. Nonetheless, as indicated above, for numerous reasons, which are not primarily economic, no one can predict the price of oil.

In summary, the state is eager to effect a major upturn in the economy's path based on the main points mentioned above and on a new economic outlook that aims to create the necessary balance between society's actual requirements and the ability to fund these requirements, with a view toward ultimately achieving a strong, stable economy based on a firm foundation.

Qatar

Qatar: French To Provide Security in Wake of 'Plot'

MM2902141696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Sulayman Nimr: "Qatari Amir Tells AL-HAYAH: Some Quarters Instigating My Father To Make a Move... But We Are Accusing No One Now"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Doha — A high-ranking Qatari source has said that his country will use French forces to safeguard its security after the announcement last week of an attempt to undermine security and stir up troubles in Qatar.

And Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar, has spoken of the existence of "quarters encouraging my father (Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani) to try to return to power by force." Shaykh Hamad, who was speaking to AL-HAYAH in Doha, preferred not to point the finger of accusation at anyone now, "because we do not want to embarrass anyone." [passage omitted]

A high-ranking Qatari official has disclosed that "Iran offered to send military forces to assist us in maintaining our security, expressing willingness to send 30,000 Iranian soldiers, but we turned down the offer."

Without doubt Doha cannot accept the Iranian offer, because if it does, it would anger the United States, which has a military presence in Qatar. Washington is now a principal and strategic ally of Qatar. Besides, acceptance of the offer would mean Qatar's severance of all bridges with all its Gulf neighbors, first and foremost Saudi Arabia.

But it seems that Qatar is planning to use French forces. A high-ranking Qatari source has disclosed that his country "will use French forces to safeguard its security against any foreign threats." The source said that French forces will begin to arrive soon.

As is known, last Sunday the amir of Qatar received an envoy of President Jacques Chirac, who conveyed to him a message stressing France's support for Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity in implementation of the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of states. [passage omitted]

The Qatari amir, who was interviewed by AL-HAYAH last Monday evening in his palace in al-Rayyan district, says that "had it not for the presence of quarters encouraging and instigating my father to return to power, he would have accepted the reality and submitted to the Qatari people's choice with regard to the change that has taken place."

On the quarters pushing his father to try to return to power by force, the Qatari amir says that "they are foreign quarters and some of those around my father." However, the amir insisted on not naming these quarters, saying: "We do not want to embarrass anyone, nor do we want to be accused of fabricating accusations, even though we have the evidence to prove the involvement of foreign quarters in attempts to undermine security and stability in Qatar." [passage omitted]

The Qatari amir admitted the existence of a problem between his country and Saudi Arabia. he believes it is a border problem. he said: 'Problems with Saudi Arabia require dialogue and meetings to tackle and solve them."

But how can a dialogue be initiated while there is an atmosphere of suspicion and stands based on hasty reactions? That is the question.

Official Gulf sources have revealed that Qatar's problem with Saudi Arabia existed before al-Hujaylan's appointment [as secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council] and goes back to the financial support provided to dissidents in London.

In his interview with AL-HAYAH Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah spoke in detail about the "plot" [some quarters] wanted to carry out in Qatar, stressing that that it was "an attempt to undermine security and stir up domestic unrest in preparation for foreign interventions." Although the interview was not for publication, AL-HAYAH publishes part of the following information revealed in the statements made by the Qatar amir and some other Qatari officials:

— The plot included smuggling in some mercenaries in cooperation with some elements stockpiling arms in Qatar. AL-HAYAH saw quantities of these arms. These would be used to blow up the palaces of the amir and his deputy, Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah, in addition to the palace of Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani, cause confusion in the

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country, and neutralize the radar systems linked to the missile batteries.

— The operation was postponed three times, and the Qatari authorities had knowledge of the plan through their agents. The Qatari authorities had to reveal the scheme after those involved canceled a plan to enter Qatar. The number of those implicated in the operation inside Qatar is 40, among them Army Training School Commander Brigadier Bakhit Marzuq al-'Abdallah and a number of security, Army, and police officers.

— The operation was led abroad by Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin- Hamad Al Thani, the amir's nephew, former commander of the Qatari police, and former economy and trade minister. He was expected to head the mercenaries when they invaded Qatar. Shaykh Hamad bin- Jasim Bin-Hamad obtained $100 million for that job.

AL-HAYAH has learned that the Qatari authorities have concluded their investigations concerning "the subversive plan." Qataris whose relatives were arrested and interrogated say that some people have been released. Semi-official figures indicate that 100 to 120 people were arrested.

Qatar: Amir Receives U.S. Jewish Organizations Delegation

JN2902213996 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 2100 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, received in his office at 1500 yesterday, Thursday [29 February], a delegation of the major Jewish organizations leaders in the United States. The meeting was attended by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, foreign minister, and His Excellency 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah, chief of the amir's office.

The two sides reviewed a number of international issues and the Middle East peace process. The delegation expressed their thanks for the invitation extended to them to visit the country.

Qatar: Russia's Posuvalyuk Meets Amir, Voices Support for Country

JN2902181996 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1530 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk in his office at 1200 today. The meeting was attended by His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, foreign minister; His Excellency 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah al-'Abdallah, chief of the amir's office; and the Russian Federation ambassador.

The Russian deputy foreign minister expressed his country's interest in developing joint cooperation between the State of Qatar and his country. His excellency reiterated the Russian Federation's respect for Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its support for security and stability in it. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen: Al-Iryani Discusses French Mediation, Agreement

NC2402101896 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, in Sanaa, by 'Adil 'Abd-al-Tawwab, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ['Abd-al-Tawwab] Welcome to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Iryani] Thank you.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] How far have the mediation efforts to resolve the dispute with Eritrea reached?

[Al-Iryani] All the ongoing mediation efforts started with Ethiopia and Egypt. Then these efforts were followed by the French mediation, which has enjoyed the blessings of several countries, including Ethiopia, Egypt, and the United States. All these countries stressed that the French mediation is an appropriate way to work out a solution. During his shuttle visits, French envoy Francis Gutmann presented what he considered a joint opinion that would be accepted by the two sides. He presented a draft agreement to us on 3 February. The Yemeni leadership told the French envoy on 4 February that this draft agreement is acceptable. The draft agreement stipulates that both sides should pursue a peaceful solution, that each side should stop any hostile action against the other, and that both sides should go to arbitration before a court. The members of this court will be chosen from the International Court of Justice. The draft agreement further authorizes France to control the military situation in the disputed region to prevent any attack during the arbitration period.

The Eritrean response to the draft agreement was handed over to the French side in Paris on Monday, 5 February. In light of this response, the French envoy returned to

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Asmara and Sanaa. He visited Sanaa following his comprehensive talks with the Eritrean side. He presented another draft which is not significantly different from the first draft, except for certain additions and amendments which emerged as a result of his deliberations with the Eritrean side.

Following revision and discussions, the Yemeni republic accepted what could be considered as a final text and expressed the conviction that this draft has become the basic and required thing for the sake of achieving a peaceful solution. This is what has been achieved as regards the Yemeni republic.

Concerning the mediation efforts, the Eritreans, based on their current information, maintain that what they received is not sufficient, although we believe that their talks with the French envoy have been presented in a formula that we accepted. We, therefore, expect that the Eritreans will accept it. We hope that what they are saying over their media is just for local consumption.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Your Excellency, if you accepted a peaceful solution, what are the obstacles impeding the achievement of this solution now?

[Al-Iryani] The basis of the solution is the agreement of principles which was worked out by the French envoy as a result of his shuttle visits. As I said , the Yemeni side considers this agreement just, fair, and acceptable, and, consequently, it should be acceptable to the two sides. I believe that the French envoy is waiting for an official response by the Eritrean side.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] In light of the mediations, did you agree on a date for a meeting between the two sides?

[Al-Iryani] This meeting is contingent upon the acceptance of the text and their agreement to attend a meeting either in Paris or Cairo or in any other capital fo• signing purposes. Only then can the two sides come to sign the agreement of principles. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Al-Anbari To Head Delegation to Oil Sale Talks

JN0103120296 Baghdad INA in English 1110 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] UN, March 1, INA—Iraq and the U.N. will resume the dialogue on the sale of Iraqi oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs of the Iraqi people on 11 March.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari will head the Iraqi delegation, while adviser Hans Corell will lead the United Nations' team to the dialogue.

Iraqi cabinet on Wednesday reviewed the outcome of the first session of the dialogue.

The Iraqi delegation comprises experts from the Ministries of Trade, Oil, Health, Industry, and the Central Bank of Iraq.

Iraq: Kurdish Radio Confirms King Husayn Meeting With Barzani Envoy

JN2902203296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn of Jordan received [in London] at 1200 on 28 February Muhsin Duzayy, personal envoy of the Kurdistan Democratic Party leader [Mas'ud Barzani]. The talks dealt with relations between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The Jordanian monarch asked Duzayy to convey his greetings to the leader of our party. The meeting lasted 45 minutes.

Iraq: Opposition Groups Planning Congress in Damascus

LD0103091696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi in Damascus: "Al-Samara'i: All Iraqi Opposition Currents Trying To Hold a Congress in Damascus Mid-March"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former Iraqi military intelligence chief, has told AL-HAYAH that all the Iraqi opposition currents — Islamic, Kurdish, and nationalist — are holding contacts with a view to holding a "congress" in Damascus during the second half of March 1996, pointing out that he has asked Syria to "open the borders" to the Iraqi opposition "in order to lend support to the opposition's nonarmed operations."

Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i's remarks to AL-HAYAH came after his meeting with [Syrian] Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in the presence of Mish'an al-Juburi, the Homeland Party [Hizb al-Watan] leader. The meeting, which lasted over two hours, is the first of its kind between Khaddam and al-Samarra'i since he fled from Iraq in late 1994.

The former military intelligence chief said that "there are serious intentions of putting into practice the idea of holding an opposition congress in Damascus, which would include some 40 figures of the Islamic, nationalist, and Kurdish currents, including (Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Mas'ud) Barzani and (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal) Talabani," pointing out that there was clear agreement during the meeting that "the meeting should neither be a broadened meeting which would waste time and effort, nor a restricted meeting which would create a leadership problem, and that the congress' objectives should be seriously aimed at uniting the opposition and finding a practical and genuine approach to save the Iraqi people."

He added that "the leadership nature and formula would be left for the meeting to decide. What is important is to gain the favors of the region's states," predicting that the meeting would take place during the second part of next month.

On the issue of opening the Syrian-Iraqi borders — closed since 1980 — to the Iraqi opposition, al-Samarra'i said that "this issue is very sensitive, because any mistake would have an adverse outcome." However, he pointed out that during his meeting with Khaddam it was reaffirmed that "the Iraqi regime should benefit only marginally (from opening the borders), with the opposition and Iraqi people benefiting the most, in order to alleviate the people's plight and lend support to the nonarmed opposition." He added that "the Syrian leadership is waiting for the (congress) attendees to put forward a proposal with regard to opening the borders, which it would examine with some of the region's states...."

Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i said that Khaddam was not at all convinced by General Husayn Kamil, with his assassination after his return to Iraq [sentence as published].

Iraq: PUK—Iraqi Army Attacks Kurdish Villages

NC2902182896 Paris AFP in English 1758 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Feb 29 (AFP)—Iraqi Army artillery, tanks and helicopters have attacked several Kurdish villages in northern Iraq, causing damage but no casualties, a leading Kurdish group said Thursday [29 February].

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The Patriotic Union (PUK) said the attacks started the previous day when an Iraqi unit supported by three tanks attacked Qushaklo and Dogirtkan near the city of Irbil, detaining nine Kurdish villagers.

Two helicopter gunships attacked two other villages near the city of Kirkuk the same day, killing livestock and destroying homes, the PUK said in a statement sent to AFP.

It said artillery gunners on Thursday shelled four villages near Irbil, destroying several more homes.

The Iraqi National Congress, an opposition alliance, has said five Iraqi soldiers were captured near Irbil on Tuesday, following a troop buildup in the region.

There was no independent confirmation of the reports. Iraqi Kurdistan has been under the control of the Kurdish opposition since the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani, in a Arab newspaper interview published Thursday, said the overthrow of President Saddam Husayn would prevent the partition of the country.

"If the regime is not replaced by another that takes up democracy and federalism, the country is threatened by partition, massacres and anarchy," Talabani said.

"Iraq must change into a country where democracy reigns and human rights are respected ... but we believe that the dictator is not capable of resolving the Kurdish problem or any other problem in Iraq," he said.

Iraq: 'Military Grouping' Cites Clash With Government Forces

MM2902200496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Opposition Talks About Clash With Government Forces"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The "Iraqi Military Grouping" [al-tajammu' al-'askari al-'iraqi], which has close links with the opposition Unified Iraqi National Congress, has said that it has captured an officer, a noncommissioned officer, and three soldiers belonging to government forces in an armed clash which took place the night before last southwest of the Kurdish city of Irbil.

The Grouping, which is based in Irbil, distributed a statement yesterday saying that units belonging to it "engaged in a fierce confrontation with the 1st Battalion of the 39th Brigade of the 7th Division of the 5th Corps" in the Makhmur area near the lines separating government and Kurdish forces. As a result, "heavy human and material losses" were inflicted on government forces; and Lieutenant Najah Mahmud Sultan, noncommissioned officer Qasim Tajil Husayn, and three soldiers were captured.

The statement gave no details about the human and material losses. However, it said that opposition forces seized a vehicle, five Kalashnikov rifles, a BKC [as published] machine gun, and a quantity of military materiel.

Iraq: Referendums Encouraged; Opposition Urged To 'Close Ranks'

NC2902213296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 25 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Recent Murders, Token of Iraqi Leader's Thirst for Power"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] When Saddam's sons-in-law defected to Jordan last August, many analysts thought that it was a preplanned arrangement by Saddam Husayn to infiltrate into the opposition ranks. At the same time, there were some other observers who believed that it was a mere defection on the part of the sons-in-law, who were weary of their father-in-law's anti-people policies.

The defection was a blessing in disguise for the United States because it gained first-hand information from the defectors on Iraq's nuclear and military plans.

However, the defectors' return to Baghdad again gave rise to scores of speculations on why they left the country and why they returned to Iraq

An Iraqi Interior Ministry's announcement stated on Saturday [24 February] that Husayn Kamil Hasan and his brother Saddam Kamil Hasan, the two unlucky sons-in-law of Saddam Husayn, who returned home from Jordan on Tuesday, had been shot to death by their own clan.

It is clear that how believable the report is. Wafiq al-Samarra'i, a former Iraqi intelligence chief who defected to Syria in 1994, has been quoted as saying that all those who returned to Iraq have been killed, whether or not they had been given assurances by Saddam.

In a bid to liquidate opponents, the Iraqi president encouraged the two defectors to return home, but later shed their blood to further consolidate his rule.

How can a person who does not spare the lives of his own kinsfolk be sympathetic to others? The move is, on the one hand, a warning to the Iraqi people that not a single Iraqi citizen will be spared by Saddam's wrath if it is revealed that he or she is sympathizing with the opposition. On the other hand, the move gets the

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point across to the Iraqi opposition that it should not be deceived by Saddam Husayn's goodwill gestures.

Irrespective of their ideological stands, the Iraqi opposition groups should close ranks in order to force the ruling Ba'th Party to listen to the voice of the Iraqi people. Referendums and free elections should be held in order to pave the way for a representative democratic system in Iraq.

If the opposition fails to prepare such groundwork, innocent Iraqi people will remain hostages in the hands of a person whose thirst for power prompts him to kill even his own kinsmen in cold blood.

Iraq: Opposition Figure on Talks With Syrian Official on Border

NC2902201296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Interview with Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi intelligence, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" Program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Some news agencies report that there was a meeting between you and [Syrian Vice President] 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in the presence of [Iraqi dissident] Mish'an al-Juburi. They say you two asked Khaddam to open the Iraq-Syria border to serve the Iraqi people. Please tell the listeners about your discussions with Khaddam and your view on opening the borders.

[Al-Samarra'i] Thank you very much for this opportunity. First of all, the meeting with Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam was very good, and we were satisfied with it. He listened to my briefing on the Iraqi and regional situation and he also informed us of some issues, policies, ideas, and stands. We were very pleased with this briefing.

As for the opening of Iraqi-Syrian border, I have a different view from some of the other opposition members. I am very sensitive to this issue. I have studied and am still studying any dangers, obstacles, or problems that could result from such a measure. Actually I do not advocate opening the border, but I absolutely respect Syria's decision. Certainly Syria is carefully examining the issue. They have never told us they would open the border.

Besides, opening the border entails difficulties. If it would ease the burden on the regime, this would be counterproductive. I understand that the Iraqi people's suffering deprives them of a free and dignified life, freedom, and freedom of expression, which is more important than the standard living. Livelihood problems could end in a month, a year, or two years, but as for freedom, no one can tell what will happen in the unforeseeable future.

I made no such request. It was the idea of the other participant, Mish'an. I have never supported him on this approach.

[Correspondent] An Iraqi citizen listening to this interview might disagree with you. An Iraq man living in Iraq might say that Wafiq is not suffering as we are and that he is not starving and deprived as we are. He might say: Let us have bread first and then worry about freedom and other issues. What is your reply?

[Al-Samarra'i] From the beginning I have been the first to ask the United Nations to force Saddam to implement the resolution calling for limited oil exports to secure food and medicine for the people. I repeated this call on Radio Monte Carlo on 15 March 1995.

I am not saying that the Iraqi people must keep starving. No. First, there are hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis abroad who are living in dire need. We want to end their suffering because they are part of the Iraq people. Opening the borders does not mean that the food situation will change. Iraq's real problem now is the Saddam regime. Because of it, Iraq cannot obtain hard currency. If hard currency is not available, no other measure can end the Iraqi people's suffering.

All our kinsfolk are in Iraq and the Iraqi people are our family, brothers, and loved ones. We have sacrificed and are willing to sacrifice our lives for their sake.

Iraq: Official Views Water Talks With Syria

JN2902141996 Baghdad INA in English 1145 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 28, INA—Iraq and Syria have agreed to coordinate stands to define a fair share in the waters of joint rivers. This came during talks held in Damascus on February 10, THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER said today.

Senior undersecretary of irrigation [ministry] and head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn described the Iraqi-Syrian talks as positive and fruitful.

Upon arrival in Baghdad early last week, Mr. Salman told (INA) that the Iraqi delegation to the talks discussed with Syrian officials means to define and reach a fair share in the water of the Euphrates River namely Iraq, Syrian and Turkey, saying that both Iraq and Syria hope to resume tripartite talks in near future.

He added that Iraq and Syria will renew calls to Turkey to attend the talks.

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According to Mr. Husayn, talks with Syria provided a good chance to exchange technical information concerning operation policy of irrigation projects.

The talks were headed by senior undersecretary of irrigation, 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn for the Iraqi side and Syrian deputy minister of irrigation Barakat Hadid.

While in Damascus, the Iraqi delegation met with Syrian Minister of Irrigation 'Abd-al-Rahman Madani and discussed issues concerning sharing waters of the Euphrates River.

On February 10, Iraq and Syria started talks in Damascus to define shares of the three countries (Iraq, Syria and Turkey) in the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

The talks which were held on specialists' level followed the construction of 22 dams by Turkey on the Tigris and the Euphrates without consulting Iraq and Syria, thus threatening water supplies to both Iraq and Syria.

The execution of the dams on the two rivers has badly affected the flow of waters in the said two rivers and lowered their levels and in consequence halved the quantity of waters coming from the sources of the two rivers in Turkey.

In 1987, Turkey has promised to allow a limited amount of water to flow across its borders with an agreement to this effect as Syria demanded.

Ankara has turned down a request by Syria to sign an agreement defining the amount of water on the pretext of being unready to define its current need for water.

Mr. Husayn added that the Iraqi delegation would put forward the issue of the pollution of the water of the Euphrates River and its causes as it poses threats to the lives of human beings let alone its effects on the industrial and agricultural activities in the river's basin, noting that Iraq hopes to work together with Turkey and Syria to solve the problem.

As regards Iraq's [stand] towards Turkey's intention to build two new dams on the Euphrates, Mr. Husayn said the building of new dams on the river will further increase the damage inflicted on Iraq by projects executed by Turkey on the Euphrates as part of a project known as the project of south-east Anatolia, affirming and reiterating Iraq's objection to the execution of the said projects. [sentence as received]

According to Mr. Husayn Iraq's Foreign Ministry sent a memorandum to Turkish Foreign Ministry early in January, 1996 reminding the Turkish Government of the international law which stipulate that any country which intents to execute a project on a joint river has to consult other countries benefiting from the same river and reach an agreement before starting work on the project.

Mr. Husayn added that it is regrettable that from time to time Turkey surprises us by erecting a dam or executing a project on the Euphrates river without consulting Iraq.

Mr. Husayn went on to say that the Turkish side declares that it does not oppose the reach of a tripartite agreement, but it puts conditions that might make the technical committee plunges into details that have nothing to do with its set objective.

Concluding his statement, Mr. Husayn said Iraqi-Syrian talks are not a substitute for the tripartite meeting, adding that Iraq hopes that the talks would be a step towards strengthening cooperation between the three countries.

Iraq: Allied Overflights Protested to Arab League

JN2702214296 Baghdad INA in English
1428 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 27, INA— Iraq protested to the Arab League for the continuation of American, British, and French warplanes violating Iraqi air space from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Iraq representative to Arab League said in a message to the secretary general of the LA [Arab League] that these war planes continued violating Iraqi air space during the period from 1 to 15 of current February and made 608 air sorties.

In the message Iraq called the secretary general to ask Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to halt these violations which contradict the League's Arab defense agreement pact, the UN Charter, and international law.

Iraq shouldered Saudi Arabia and Kuwait the responsibility for all damage caused by the violations as well as security, political, and economic threats resulted from such acts.

Iraqi representative demanded the distribution of the message to the member states.

Iraq: Health Minister Receives French Foreign Ministry Delegation

JN2902195496 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 29 Feb (INA) — Health Minister Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak met today with a French Foreign Ministry delegation, led by Louis Michel Fira [name as transliterated].

During the meeting, the minister underlined the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the crime of the

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unfair embargo, which has been in place for more than five years. The embargo has caused a severe shortage of medicine and health and environmental requirements.

The two sides discussed ways of developing health cooperation. The meeting was attended by the French charge d'affaires in Baghdad.

Iraq: Ba'th Official Meets Italian Party Leaders

JN2902175396 Baghdad INA in English
1130 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rome, Feb 29, INA—Member of the Foreign Relations Bureau of the Iraq's Command of the Arab Ba'th Party Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, head of the Iraqi delegation currently on a several day visit to Italy met here on Wednesday with head of the parliamentary group of the New Communist Party Anjeala Billy [name as received] and head of the international relations department in the party Dr. Nectora.

During the meeting, Mr. Hammudi reviewed the relation between Iraq and the Security Council and the dialogue with the U.N on oil for food and medication and basic requirements of the Iraqi people.

Mrs. Anjeala Billy expressed feelings of friendship towards the Iraqi people, confirming the support of her party of Iraq's legitimate demands of lifting the embargo.

Iraq: Ministry Said Ready To Supply Electricity to North

JN2902171396 Baghdad INA in English
1150 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 28, INA—Ministry of Industry and Minerals has said it is ready to supply northern provinces of the autonomous region of Kurdistan with electricity, THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER said today.

A source at the ministry said the ministry's staff have relinked and reconnected the national power grid to ensure the provision of electricity to all parts of the autonomous region, noting that Dahuk province is centrally fed with electricity.

The source added that the ministry's staff have repaired damaged electric cables and power transformers that used to cause repeated and long outages.

Electricity was restored to Dahuk province on August 15, 1995 after fixing damaged electric cables that link the province's power grid.

The source added that recent events witnessed by the region put all electric cables that connect the northern region to the control of the central government. [sentence as received]

Because of the absence of central authority in the region, components of the electric cables of al-Ta'mim-Ninawa and electric cables connecting al-Sulaymaniyah-Ninawa province with Irbil were damaged and stolen, and the ministry's staff managed to restore damaged electric cables to work.

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Israel: Israel Rejects Hamas Cease-Fire Proposal

TA0103052896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has rejected the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] proposal for a cease-fire in return for a halt in the war against it and the release of all its members from jail. The organization said it would give Israel until 8 March to respond, but political circles say that negotiations will only be held with the Palestinian Authority.

A senior Palestinian source has said that Israel held secret contacts with Hamas prior to Sunday's [25 February] terrorist attacks, but nothing came of them. The same source disclosed that the perpetrators of the Jerusalem and Ashqelon attacks were controlled by a member of the Hamas leadership in Syria, Shaykh Khalil, who also controlled Yahya 'Ayyash.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the commander of the Central Command issued an order that work permits for Israel not be given to residents of the al-Fawwar refugee camp from which the two suicide terrorists came. Similar instructions were also issued against al-Yamun village, the Janin area village where hostile terrorist activity was discovered.

Israel: Baraq Rejects Hamas Cease-Fire Offer, Views Elections

TA0103071296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 1 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by Me'ir Einstein; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Einstein] Is there anything to discuss with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] on its proposal for a cease-fire?

[Baraq] Our experience has shown that at this stage we cannot be sure who is behind the leaflet and what its real aim is. Our experience has shown that it is wrong to be hasty. In general, however, Israel does not negotiate with the Hamas terrorist body. Our partner is the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the basis of our agreement with them is that it is up to the PA to act against Hamas. If we recognize the right of a different body inside the PA to negotiate with us, then what is the PA's authority and what is it commitment? We expect the Hamas terrorist nucleus to be disbanded and disarmed by the PA. It is an internal Palestinian process.

[Einstein] But we complain to 'Arafat that he isn't doing enough to disband the terrorist organizations, so perhaps Israel should hold a dialogue with Hamas?

[Baraq] Israel should definitely work with 'Arafat and clarify the significance of our demand and the link between that demand and overall relations and continued negotiations. There is no room for negotiating with terrorist organizations inside the PA because we would be letting it off from its main responsibility under the agreement.

[Einstein] Yoni Ben-Menahem quoted a PA source as saying that prior to the latest attacks, Israel held secret contacts with Hamas which failed. Do you know anything about that?

[Baraq] I don't know anything about that. We shouldn't be mistaken about the word Hamas. Hamas has clinics and social welfare institutions, but part of its budget is problematic because it is diverted to terrorism. Still, Hamas is part of the Palestinian system and we have no issue about it becoming part of the Palestinian political system — it is, of course, not even our business — but its terrorist element is something that must be disbanded and that must be done by the PA based on our agreements with the PA.

[Einstein] Minister Baraq, I would like to turn to internal politics. The latest polls show that the gap between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu has closed. For instance, a poll published in today's YEDI'OT AHARONOT shows that the two are tied. As manager of Peres' personal campaign headquarters, are you worried about that development?

[Baraq] This week's terrorist attacks enrage and tear at our hearts. These atrocities naturally have an impact on the public's outlook, but I am sure that our public knows that the solution to terrorism is not to bring Refa'el Eytan, Ari'el Sharon, or reserve Captain Binyamin Netanyahu back to the government compound. They will not resolve the terrorism problem. They fought terrorism as best they could during their time. The proper solution is a combination of an uncompromising war against terror by us and the Palestinian partner and a fundamental political solution to the conflict between us. That leads the public to Labor. I have no doubt that when the public recovers from the shock, which we all underwent, the gap between Labor and Likud will expand and stabilize.

[Einstein] It seems that the Likud's merger with David Levi's Gesher party will probably take place and give the Likud an advantage at the polls.

[Baraq] Based on the upheavals of the past 24 hours, it would be wrong to welcome it until Bibi and Levi sign an agreement. But if they want to join forces, that is their right. The public knows their views about each other. In the long run, if that merger takes place, it

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will clarify the alternative between Labor's policy — which combines defense action with a vision and a clear political direction and light at the end of the tunnel — and the Likud's line of action, which in essence does not exist, but if we try to guess from the mixture of slogans and remarks, it is a continuation of the deadlock.

[Einstein] In recent days, there were reports about Labor courting David Levi. Are they correct?

[Baraq] I don't know anything about that. David Levi is an experienced politician. He chose to leave the Likud and now chooses to return to it.

[Einstein] I would like to conclude where we began. There is a report in YEDI'OT AHARONOT that Labor plans a personal campaign against Bibi.

[Baraq] I do not think that a personal campaign against Netanyahu is needed. The public knows him and has to judge whether Bibi with his experience and his record and his lack of a plan can compete with Peres' total record of experience, performance, and clear plans. I have no doubt what the public will decide.

[Einstein] Do you not think that focusing your campaign on the personal talents of Peres' adversary could cause the campaign to degenerate?

[Baraq] I don't think we are going to focus on any mysterious talents. We are simply going to put the question to the public and ask it whether in view of what we are facing, Bibi has the experience and the background to lead the nation. What is involved is the fate of the State of Israel and our children's lives. Peres, in my view, is in a different category of leader than Bibi.

Israel: Arab Groups Suspected of Transferring Money to Hamas

TA0103121396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Ya'aqov Gallanti and Hanan Schlein]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel Police's National Unit for Fraud Investigations has been looking into suspicions that two nonprofit societies run by Israeli Arabs are involved in the transfer of money received from abroad to families of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members killed in suicide bombings.

As part of the investigation the police have been tracing Hamas' financial sources in Israel and abroad. The investigation was launched following information obtained by the police to the effect that the two Arab bodies, one in East Jerusalem and the other in Nazareth, track down the families of suicide bombers in the territories in order to give them money.

Israel: Peres Orders Halt to Hebron House Demolition Orders

TA2802170696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, the prime minister complied with a request by Minister Yosi Sarid and ordered that the demolition of illegally built houses in Hebron be stopped.

Minister Sarid contacted Mr. Peres after hearing on Qol Yisra'el that a house was being demolished. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports, however, that by the time the workers at the site received Peres' order, they had already demolished five of six houses that the Civil Administration decided to demolish.

Israel: Decisions Reached by Ministerial Committee on Security

TA2802170396 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 1420 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Issued by the Cabinet Secretariat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Ministerial Committee on National Security, which met today (Wednesday), 28.02.96, to discuss measures and assessments in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, reached the following decisions:

1. To demand from the Palestinian Authority that it prevent the existence of illegal armed organizations.

2. To establish a bus security committee. Towards this end, Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or will be given responsibility for discussing the matter with the Ministers of Public Security, Transport and Finance, the head of the GSS [General Security Service] and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Chief of Staff, and will submit a set of proposals to the Prime Minister and Defense Minister within 48 hours.

If necessary, either the Ministerial Committee or the relevant ministers involved will convene.

3. The closure in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza will continue. The closure will apply only to residents, not to the transfer of goods.

4. To bolster the security forces in Jerusalem and along the separation line. To this end, the Minister of Public Security, the Finance Minister, the Deputy Defense Minister and the IDF Chief of Staff will meet at the beginning of next week to reach agreement on the issue, including a budget.

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Israel: Shohat Orders Water Debt Deducted From Taxes Owed to PA

TA2902123496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Finance Minister Avraham Shohat has ordered the director of the Customs and VAT Department to deduct 3.5 million shekels from the money owed to the Palestinian Authority [PA] due to the PA's debt to the Meqorot water company. Our economic affairs correspondent Menahem Friedman reports that the PA has ignored warnings and failed to pay its debt. Sources in the Finance Ministry said the move is anchored in the agreement signed with the PA.

Israel: Positive Ties With Post-Saddam Iraq Believed Possible

TA2902160796 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 p 2

[Commentary by 'Oded Granot: "After Saddam"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A senior official in a western capital who receives ongoing intelligence reports about what is going on in Iraq briefed the Israeli ambassador last week. The ambassador listened to an educated analysis about the return of the defectors to Baghdad and, as a bonus, was also given a solid assessment: Saddam will let them live for several months, and then will try to get rid of them quietly. [passage omitted]

The Iraqi defectors affair remains a mystery. How did they make the mistake of fleeing to Jordan? How did they make the bigger mistake of returning to the lions' den? Why did the United States not grant the two entry visas and make them a spearhead in the war on Saddam? There are two possible answers: Either the Americans did not trust them, despite receiving pretty good information from them; or, as Defense Secretary Perry had hinted, the United States has a better plan to overthrow Saddam, through cooperation with other countries headed by Jordan. It should be hoped that the plan is really good, because the blanket of sanctions designed to choke the Iraqi ruler turned out to be full of holes.

Israel's policy regarding Iraq is dictated by solid and tough patterns determined in Washington. The United States has forbidden Israel to hold any contacts with Iraq and makes sure the instruction is being followed. A high-level U.S. official who visited Israel several months ago, for other reasons, at the same time wanted his interlocutors to tell him that the embargo was being carefully observed. It may well be that someone heard something about a single feeler Israel had sent to Iraq through Jordan, or about some Iraqi attempt to establish contacts with the Israelis. The indirect Iraqi message reads: Now that you have signed a deal with the Palestinians, there are no problems between us.

Official Israel avoids Iraq like the plague so as not to annoy the Americans. Given Saddam's nature, this makes sense. Yet assuming the man will not live forever, one can estimate that after he is removed from power, the Middle East picture will dramatically change and allow the opening of a direct channel of communication between Baghdad and Jerusalem.

After all, the two countries have common political and economic goals, and Iran as a common enemy. The Jerusalem-Amman-Baghdad axis could be commercially significant. It could serve as a path to and from the Persian Gulf and be part of the new Middle East. All that is needed now is to get Saddam out of the way.

Israel: Government Urged To Refuse U.S. Request for Troops to Bosnia

TA2902123996 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 p 3

[Editorial: "No to the Bosnia Request"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The government must refuse the U.S. request for the dispatch of an Israeli army unit to supervise the Bosnian cease-fire. There is something tempting about the idea of the whole world watching IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers police Sarajevo alongside NATO soldiers. Furthermore, it is hard to refuse the Americans' request at a time when we have been enjoying such massive U.S. support in the international arena. Yet Bosnia is no Haiti. Bosnia is a ticking bomb that may go off at any minute. About 200 mujaheddin, most of them Iranians, still serve as volunteers in the Bosnian Army. They will seize any opportunity to harm Israeli soldiers, "who terrorize Muslim Bosnia as they do occupied Palestine."

And at the same time, the Serbs of Yugoslavia will closely monitor the way Israelis handle the delicate situation between the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Bosnia. Israel stands to gain nothing from the IDF's presence in Bosnia other than political embroilment and, perhaps, confrontations liable to result in casualties.

Israel: Buchanan's Isolationism Seen Affecting Peace Process

TA0103120596 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Mar 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Buchanan and Oslo"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Presidential contender Pat Buchanan has good reason to be happy about the

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latest Republican primary results. After winning in New Hampshire, he finished a respectable third in the Arizona race, behind stumbling "front-runner" Sen. Robert Dole, who in turn trailed political newcomer Steve Forbes. He also came in second to Dole in South Dakota, a state viewed as Dole's indisputable territory. For a candidate initially considered no more than a fringe phenomenon, Buchanan has turned in a stunning performance. That he has spent relatively little on the campaign makes his showing close to incredible.

This does not mean that he has a ghost of a chance of being nominated as the Republican candidate for the presidency. It is even doubtful that he will garner enough delegates to the Republican convention to become a candidate for the vice presidency. But unless his fortunes suddenly turn sour — which is unlikely in the absence of a charismatic contender in the current Republican crop — he will be a force to be reckoned with.

Buchanan draws bigots, anti-Semites, and xenophobes to his flag. But it would be a mistake to view him only as the American version of Le Pen or Zhirinovskiy. While his French and Russian counterparts are unlikely to enlarge their popular support unless their countries are afflicted with a major economic crisis, Buchanan may develop broader appeal.

The historic trend he is riding is uniquely American. Known as isolationism, it can only exist in a country as powerful, rich, productive, and self-sufficient as the U.S. It was unfashionable as long as another superpower posed a global threat which forced America to form alliances in Europe and Asia. But with the threat removed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the return to "fortress America" may seem an enticing proposition to a large segment of the electorate. Not surprisingly, such a trend jibes with the idea that the country's gates should be closed to immigrants, particularly those who do not happen to be white.

That such a vision of America is neither economically viable nor humane is very much beside the point. The fact is that a growing number of Americans are willing to vote for a demagogue who promotes it. And in a country where the government is almost obsessively responsive to the electorate's mood, it will be impossible to ignore them, regardless of who is elected to the presidency.

The ramifications of these developments for Israel are clear. A populist, an isolationist, and an America firster in the worst sense of these appellations, Buchanan wants a halt to foreign aid and the end of American military presence abroad. To expect his followers to support international guarantees of any kind, let alone interventions which risk American lives, is totally unrealistic. Even more moderate Americans now oppose military involvement except in defense of what are clearly American interests.

Yet the whole structure of the Oslo agreement depends on American financial, political and moral support for the process. Only the U.S. can muster the support of other industrial countries for the huge investment, the regional Marshall Plan envisioned by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

The agreement with Syria, too, hinges on the amount of political, economic, and moral investment the U.S. is willing to make to entice Damascus into a White House signing ceremony. In the short run, the Buchanan phenomenon may actually help President Bill Clinton to win a second term: It is still far easier to run against a party which can be painted with the brush of extremism than against plain conservatives. And Clinton's reelection will undoubtedly bolster Israeli-American cooperation.

But what will happen four years hence is anybody's guess. Whether Buchanan himself or a slightly more palatable candidate, with less negative baggage, will then capture the imagination of the American voter is less relevant than the fact that isolationism is again becoming a significant force in American politics. It makes the notion that Israel can put its trust in a regional Pax Americana seem a short-sighted, unacceptable gamble with the nation's future.

Israel: Poll Shows Peres, Netanyahu in Near Dead Heat

TA0103124496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (SHABAT supplement) in Hebrew 1 Mar 96 pp 4, 5

[Gallup poll]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Question: If elections were held today, and David Levi quit the premiership race, and the candidates were Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu, for whom would you vote?

Answer: Pere—46 percent; Netanyahu—44 percent; do not know—10 percent.

Question: If elections were held today and the candidates were Shim'on Peres, Binyamin Netanyahu, and David Levi, for whom would you vote?

Answer: Peres—43 percent; Netanyahu—35 percent; Levi—6 percent; do not know—16 percent.

Question: Have this week's terrorists attacks affected your voting in the Knesset elections and how?

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Answer: Not affected—66 percent; I am now reconsidering—6 percent; moved from Likud to Labor—0.5 percent; moved from Labor to Likud—7 percent; moved to the right (Moledet)—10 percent; moved to the left (Meretz)—1 percent; do not know—9.5 percent.

Question: Who reacted better to the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, Shim'on Peres or Binyamin Netanyahu?

Answer: Peres—21 percent; Netanyahu—37 percent; both the same—19 percent; neither—5 percent; do not know—18 percent.

Question: Should the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] operate against the terrorist organizations within the boundaries of the Palestinian Authority?

Answer: It should—67 percent; it should not—26 percent; do not know—7 percent.

Question: Who would you prefer to see leading the Likud, Binyamin Netanyahu or Dan Meridor?

Answer: Meridor—38 percent; Netanyahu—37 percent; neither—11 percent.

Among Likud voters: Netanyahu—56 percent; Meridor—36 percent.

Among Labor voters: Netanyahu—24 percent; Meridor—47 percent.

Question: Do you support the peace process with the Palestinians?

Answer: Support—66 percent; oppose—27 percent; do not know—7 percent.

Question: Will halting the peace process increase or decrease the level of terror?

Answer: Increase—32 percent; decrease—30 percent; will make no difference—22 percent; do not know—16 percent.

Question: Some argue that a total closure will prevent terrorist attacks, while others claim that an indefinite closure will in the long run create ferment and increase terror. Which claim do you support?

Answer: Total closure will prevent terror—66 percent; indefinite closure will increase terror—23 percent; do not know—11 percent.

Question: Do you think there exists a policy that can bring a total halt to terror attacks; if so, which party can attain this goal?

Answer: Do not believe there exists such a policy—61 percent; Likud-Tzomet—12 percent; Labor—10 percent, Moledet—2 percent; other/do not know—15 percent.

Question: How do you envision Israel's relations with the Palestinians in another 10 years?

Answer: Israel will coexist peacefully alongside an independent Palestinian entity—40 percent; the situation will remain as it is today—22 percent; there will be no peace and the situation will be worse—23 percent; do not know—15 percent.

Question: Were the Knesset elections held today, for which party would you vote? (quoted in Knesset seats)

	Current Poll	Poll 14 Feb	1992 Election
Labor	42	47	44
Likud + Tzomet + David Levi	43	40	40
Meretz	5-6	6	12
SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]	4	3-4	6
Moledet	2	2	3
Agudat Yisra'el, Degel Hatora	4-5	4	4
National Religious Party	5-6	4	6
Arabs (HADASH, Darawshah, al-Tibi)	5-6	5	5
The Third Way	3	3	—
Immigrant Party	3	3	—
Other/refused to answer	2	3	—

The poll about the premiership and Knesset elections was conducted among a representative sample of 500 Israeli adults on 28 February, after the contacts about a merger between the Likud and David Levi were reported. All other questions were polled on 27 February among a representative sample of 510 of Israel's adult Jewish population. The margin of error is approximately 4 percent. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Labor Election Campaign To Be Aimed Against Netanyahu

TA0103064296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 1 Mar 96 pp 1, 8

[Report by Orli Azulay-Katz]

[FBIS Translated Text] Labor members began planning a personal campaign against Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday, in the wake of latest public opinion polls showing that Netanyahu is tied with Peres if Levi quits the race for the premiership and showing Likud-Tzomet tied with Labor. According to a Dahaf poll published by YEDI'OT AHARONOT today, Labor and Likud-Tzomet each get 40 Knesset seats, while Peres and Netanyahu each get 48 percent of the vote.

Labor is very worried by the polls. Following the lethargy in the party because everybody was busy with the primaries, it was decided to conduct a personal election campaign against Netanyahu to stem his rise in the polls. The planned campaign will portray Netanyahu as an unreliable person lacking leadership and experience, "a plastic man" who does not have the proper background to run a country and who cannot be trusted. In contrast, Peres will be portrayed as a leader with an impressive record.

At the same time, efforts are under way in political channels to score some achievement in the talks with the Syrians in Maryland in order to use it as a trump card before the elections.

Hayim Ramon, Labor's campaign publicity manager, refused to comment on the results of the Dahaf poll. "We are not going to start reacting to every poll," he said. Labor sources pointed out that when there were terrorist attacks in Rabin's time polls also showed him tied with Netanyahu.

Minister 'Uzi Bar'am, a member of the campaign headquarters, told me last night: "It may very well be that the latest polls reflect the mood in the wake of the bombings and that the situation will return to what it was within a few days. If that is not the case, then there is room for concern."

Israel: Levi Considering Netanyahu's Proposal To Join Likud

TA0103114796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] David Levi promised to "study and consider" a new offer from the Likud last night, after he was about to close the door on any agreement. This in effect marks the beginning of formal talks on creating a three-way bloc with the Likud, Tzomet, and Levi's new Gesher Party.

The entire effort was revived at the last minute by a Tzomet concession which made it possible for Likud chairman Binyamin Netanyahu to make a new proposal to Levi.

Levi had already summoned a press conference to denounce the Likud and the way it had handled the entire episode. He had launched his acerbic attack when a fax from MK [Knesset member] Ari'el Sharon arrived with the new offer and changed the picture.

The sticking point throughout the day was Levi's demand to get precisely what Tzomet had in its agreement with Likud. That would have meant seven safe slots for Levi's people on the list of Knesset candidates.

Netanyahu could not afford to give away so many of the Likud's own slots and had asked that Tzomet make do with just six. But Tzomet had refused until Levi was about to begin his angry press conference.

Then Tzomet flinched and Netanyahu's brinkmanship paid off. Tzomet agreed to move its seventh candidate from the 38th to the 42nd slot. The 41st slot would go to Levi's seventh candidate.

After first acrimoniously hitting out at the Likud, Levi said he would now "study and consider" the offer. The Gesher Party forums will have to decide upon it in the proper manner. Only now will the substantive negotiations actually begin.

Levi opened his address to the press by claiming that "there have been no real negotiations up to now, because no formal offer has come to us. A trusted friend, Ari'el Sharon, talked to me about the Likud's dismal state and about the dire need to raise morale. I told him that we were a party on our own path now.... In view of what we had experienced in the past, and of what we cannot and shall not forget, I told him I had doubts we could reach an agreement."

Levi maintained that his apprehensions about dealing with the Likud were borne out "in the despicable manner in which all this was portrayed in the media. We were made to look like petty hagglers, when we did not so much as respond.... The way this was handled offended us and inflicted damage on the very morale that was to be boosted...we have nothing but contempt for the unfair handling of all this."

Asked about Netanyahu's wish to meet him face to face, Levi said it was "theatrics; lacking sincerity, and responsibility. Two years ago, when the man

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apologized, I said I will judge him by his actions. I want nothing personally."

Levi stressed that "Gesher is not considering a merger with the Likud and will retain its independence, even if a link with the Likud is formed. The basis will have to be how to best further Gesher's ideological goals." He said he wants nothing for himself and did not ask for the Foreign Ministry in a possible Netanyahu government.

Sharon confirmed that "the subject of portfolios or the number of slots on the list had not been raised by Levi. He only wanted what Tzomet got."

Sharon was optimistic and thought "it is now possible to move on to the next phase. I want to thank Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan for his flexibility which made all this possible. I am sure we can form a three-way alignment and then expand it with a fourth partner."

Israel: Labor Reportedly Holding Contacts With Levi's Party

TA2902102696 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Amir Neuman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Labor Party launched an effort yesterday designed to prevent an accord between Knesset Member [MK] David Levi and the Likud regarding Gesher's joining the Likud-Tzomet alignment. Senior Labor echelons appointed representatives who held contacts with Levi and his aides throughout the day in an attempt to convince Gesher to join the Labor bloc or, at least, to prevent the new party's joining the Likud bloc.

It was further learned last night that in the past few days, Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu relayed to David Levi a document of understandings which included a proposal that Levi would receive the Foreign Ministry portfolio in his cabinet should the Likud win the elections. The document was conveyed through an additional channel of communication initiated by Netanyahu in secret, in parallel with the channel conducted recently by Ari'el Sharon.

Despite the efforts, no progress was achieved in yesterday's negotiations. Sources close to the contacts reported last night that the Likud-Gesher negotiations have encountered considerable difficulties — not the least of which result from the profound mistrust between Netanyahu and Levi — and that the existence of parallel channels of negotiations has enhanced the mistrust. [passage omitted]

Yesterday's news on the emerging Levi-Likud agreement generated serious apprehensions in Labor's top echelons. In view of that, it was decided to resume the efforts to forge understandings that will foil the establishment of a tripartite Likud-Tzomet-Gesher alignment. Labor leaders realize that since Levi will withdraw from the premiership race should an accord with the Likud be achieved, the race will be decided in the first round.

The anticipated Likud-Levi agreement is upsetting the Labor strategy, since the working premise was that the SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] electorate would vote for David Levi in the first round of premiership elections, thereby offsetting the ultra-Orthodox vote, which is expected to be given principally to Netanyahu. According to this Labor premise, if a second round is held, the ultra-Orthodox vote will carry considerably less weight because most of these voters will not bother to vote for either of the remaining candidates. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 29 February reports: "Labor sources have denied that contacts are under way with MK David Levi. Senior party sources told our party affairs correspondent that the idea to approach Levi had come up, but Shim'on Peres rejected it."]

Israel: MA'ARIV Polls Soldiers on Election Trends

TA2802172896 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (BEHIROT supplement) in Hebrew 28 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Avi Peled on poll conducted by MA'ARIV on 25 February at a Tel Aviv soldier pick-up point]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The horrible terror attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon on 25 February did not alter the soldiers' stands: They gave Shim'on Peres yet another mandate to conduct his peace policy. In a MA'ARIV poll, Peres received more than half of the soldiers' votes and did not require a second round. Still, judging from poll results accumulated over the past four weeks, Peres is 0.5 percent short of winning in the first round. [passage omitted]

Of the 504 soldiers who took part in the poll on voting for prime minister, 256 supported Peres (50.7 percent), 215 voted Netanyahu (42.65 percent), and 33 voted for David Levi (6.5 percent). According to the results, the gap between Peres and Netanyahu stands at 8 percent. In any event, the poll did not cover a representative sample. [passage omitted]

Following are the results of the vote for the Knesset by 591 soldiers: Labor — 230 (38.91 percent); Likud — 201 (34.01 percent); National Religious Party — 32 (5.41 percent); Meretz — 32 (5.41 percent); Moledet — 31 (5.25 percent); The Third Way — 29 (4.9 percent); David Levi — 23 (3.89 percent); Sharansky — 6;

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SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] — 2; Memad — 1. Taking the Arab and the ultra-Orthodox sectors into consideration, it may be assumed that the right-left balance of power will remain close after the elections. [passage omitted]

In results accumulated from four different MA'ARIV polling stations in which 1,933 soldiers participated, Peres won 49.45 percent of the vote, Netanyahu received 40.55 percent, and David Levi won 9.82 percent. [passage omitted]

Israel: Third Way States Position on Separation, Jerusalem

TA0103120396

[FBIS Report] Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 1 March carries the following paid advertisement by The Third Way on page 2:

There is only one party that says things clearly.

1. The Third Way states: A full and permanent closure should be imposed and a separation must be implemented between the Palestinian autonomy areas and Israel. Metropolitan Jerusalem, the Jordan Rift Valley, the 'Etzyon Bloc, the blocs of Jewish settlements in Judaea and Samaria, and the Qatif Bloc will be in Israeli territory.

2. The Third Way states: The return to the autonomy areas of Ahmad Jibril, George Habash, Layla Khalid, and other members of the terrorist organizations should be banned.

3. The Third Way states: There should be massive construction in the Jerusalem area: the 'Etzyon Bloc, Efrat, Ma'ale Adumim, Giv'at Ze'ev, and Betar.

To separate from the Palestinians in peace — The Third Way.

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Jordan: Government Reportedly 'To Freeze' Diplomatic Ties With Iraq

JN2902183696 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Khalil Khurma in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Jordanian sources have told AL-BAYAN that the Jordanian Government has adopted many measures to freeze diplomatic ties with Iraq. These measures will be announced following the return of Jordan's King Husayn from his current trip to the West. Moreover, diplomatic sources in Amman told AL-BAYAN that there is a plan to explode the situation inside Iraq through opposition elements. This plan will be discussed during the Jordanian monarch's meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington. [passage omitted]

Jordan: IAF Regrets Denunciation of Jerusalem, Ashqelon Operations

JN2902174996 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—AL-DUSTUR—Deputies of the Islamic Action Front [IAF] at the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee have regretted a statement by the committee's chairman in which he denounced the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations.

In a statement issued yesterday, the IAF deputies said that this statement does not represent the Foreign Affairs Committee or the conscience of our people, who view these two operations as legitimate national resistance and a natural response to the flagrant oppression represented by the usurper entity and its rancorous institutions. AL-DUSTUR published the statement by the chairman of the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee citing QUDS PRESS.

The IAF deputies said that they respect their colleague's right to express his convictions at a personal or parliamentary level. However, they said, as a chairman of a committee, his convictions should be in line with those of the committee he chairs.

They added: It would have been appropriate for the committee's chairman to denounce the Israeli prime minister's statements that unified Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the State of Israel and his statements regarding the Palestinian state, the barbaric shelling in southern Lebanon, and the continued detention of 6,000 prisoners inside the occupation jails.

Jordan: 7 Imprisoned in Israel Freed, Return Home

JN2902131096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Seven Jordanians who were imprisoned in Israel returned via the King Husayn Bridge today. The Israeli judiciary recently agreed to release them after talks between officials from the governments of both countries over several months.

The freed prisoners greatly appreciated the Jordanian Government's efforts, as instructed by His Majesty King Husayn, to ensure their release and return to the homeland. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Shubaylat Reportedly To Run for Parliamentary Seat

JN2902193396 Amman THE STAR in English 29 Feb-7 Mar 96 p 2

[From the "Jordan Week" page; edited by 'Awni Abu-Ghawsh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After his resounding victory as the new President of the Engineers Association, Layth Shubaylat has not lost his appetite for politics. He has vowed to fight for one of the parliamentary seats that has become vacant in the al-Balqa' constituency following the death of Ibrahim Shihdah.

The Government, embarrassed by his election win while still in prison, is determined to put on a brave face. The new Justice Minister deputy 'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi said earlier that Shubaylat can be released on bail if the court so desires. He was supposed to be released just before the Eid Festivities, but the dragging continued. Mr al-Dughmi wouldn't commit himself but went as far as to say that the former Justice Minister Hisham al-Tal was "too strict on the Shubaylat issue."

The re-elected president could become a hot political potato for the Government if he fights and wins a seat in the Lower House.

His re-election is seen by many as a vindication of his anti-normalization views. Deputy Khalil Haddadin says Shubaylat's election is nothing less than a popular referendum on the normalization policies of the Government.

Dr Dhib 'Abdullah, an Islamic Action Front deputy and head of the Lower House Public Liberties Committee said Shubaylat has come to represent what he called the silent majority.

Meanwhile Mr. Shubaylat continues to receive support from all around the world. The famous Egyptian intellectual Dr Fahmi Huwaydi said Shubaylat was "truthful and courageous."

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Congratulation notes for his re-election as President of the Engineers' Association came from Syria, Lebanon Qatar and Spain.

Jordan: Deputies Comment on Government Policy Statement

JN2902182696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Parliamentarians cautioned on Wednesday against placing high expectations in the new government of 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti but agreed that the new government would bring about change in one form or another.

In interviews with the Jordan Times shortly after Prime Minister al-Kabariti read his government's policy statement in Parliament, lawmakers from different political trends raised numerous queries over the government's foreign policy and its ability to carry out the needed reforms in the Kingdom on the domestic level. However, they did not hide their hopes that it might.

Leftist Deputy Tujan Faysal, a known critic and opponent of policies and programmes of former governments, described Mr. al-Kabariti's government as "a fresh start for a new era."

"It is true that the statement was very long and detailed but it expressed a positive orientation on the local front," Ms. Faysal told the JORDAN TIMES. "The statement also showed the government's commitment to achieve social justice and intention to cooperate with the legislative authority."

In the policy statement, Mr. al-Kabariti pledged to safeguard public freedoms and apply the rule of law. He also highlighted the need for cooperation between the legislative and executive powers to achieve these objectives.

He is very dynamic, open, and ambitious," Ms. Faysal said, "But I have some reservations."

The only female deputy criticised what she saw as "strong statement to the press" regarding other Arab countries, Bahrain in particular.

"He should be more cautious," she said.

Islamic Action Front Deputy Muhammad 'Uwaydah voiced reservations over Mr. al-Kabariti's foreign policy, but they were mainly directed at the Kingdom's "rushed moves" towards normalisation of relations with Israel.

Dr. 'Uwaydah, a member of the 16-member IAF bloc at the House, said the government does not live up to the IAF's expectation, especially in the "normalisation field" and policies towards Iraq. But he expressed hopes that the new cabinet will be able to bring about change on the local front.

"There is change... and we hope there will be (more)," Dr. 'Uwaydah told the Jordan Times.

Centrist Deputy and former Minister of State Muhammad Abu 'Alim said he could not form a final judgment on Mr. al-Kabariti's government before "seeing it in action" and implied that people should not have high expectations "since all governments try to bring new hopes to people in distress."

"Every government has its pro and cons," Dr. Abu 'Alim told the Jordan Times. "All governments come with the prospect of change..."

"(But) whoever does it we're all the way with him," he added.

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Lebanon: President—Security Fears Prompted Curfew Decision

NC2902173296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Report by Ahmad 'Izz-al-Din, the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent, at the B'abda Presidential Palace—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Deputies who visited the president of the republic today cited him as asserting that there is no alternative to calm dialogue and that the state cannot risk law and order. He said: We do not want to go back to the unknown.

The deputies also said that the president stressed that prevention is better than cure and that deep suspicions, fears, and information about security disorders prompted the decision to impose a curfew. They added that the president stressed that the state is ready to meet all possible demands.

Regarding the security measures, the deputies said that these measures were taken because of certain circumstances. It was a cabinet decision and will be terminated by a cabinet decision when the uncertain atmosphere disappears. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Army Arrests Photographers, Confiscates Film During Curfew

NC2902172096 Paris AFP in English 1553 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Feb 29 (AFP)—The Lebanese Army arrested three photographers here Thursday [29 February] on charges of taking illegal pictures of soldiers enforcing a curfew and confiscated their films, news organisations said.

One of the photographers, Ahmad Azakir, is employed by the Associated Press while the other two were freelancers, 'Ali Hasan and Michel Burzghal. They were still being held several hours later, according to the U.S. news agency. But a military source told AFP the three had been released.

Earlier a local AFP correspondent and a photographer with the opposition daily AL-DIYAR were held for 90 minutes in the southern city of Sidon when they set out with cameras into the streets. The photographers had their film confiscated.

The army on Thursday imposed an unprecedented 11-hour curfew on Beirut and half a dozen other towns to bar striking workers from staging illegal demonstrations. Around 1,600 people who violated the curfew were rounded up across Lebanon but the army began releasing most of them after lifting the curfew.

Lebanon: Hizballah Condemns Government Measures, Speculates on Motives

NC0103111096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 1 Mar 96

[From the "Pause With an Event" feature]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] When the government held an extraordinary meeting on 28 February to discuss the call for strikes and demonstrations on 29 February, the prime minister did not trust the information minister to read the resolutions. Since he can do anything he wants, the financier, the amir of the country, the sovereign decided that he would read the mourning of democracy and freedom in Lebanon to make the impact of the news on citizens more painful than the batons of the forces ordered to confront the citizens out of fear for the government. To subjugate the homeland and make it obey his orders, the marshal ordered entrusting the [word indistinct] to keep law and order for three months, a period that can be extended or reduced. To show as much force as possible he ordered his defense minister to issue a decree imposing a night curfew on the major town. Even the curfew was planned for towns on a sectarian basis. [passage omitted]

The mourning process was defined by the marshal. Ordinary citizens were not allowed to attend. He wanted to limit those attending the announcement to ministers, deputies, and diplomats. If he could have prevented the deputies from attending he would have done so. But he prevented the deputies' aides from attending and ordered their guards to return to barracks. He himself is assigned more than an airborne battalion to protect him from the hungry. The deputies represent the people and, since there is fear of the people, the deputies are safe. The ruler himself is afraid. On one occasion he might usurp power under the pretext of regional circumstances, and on another in the name of the oil [-rich] Arabs and the abundance of money, the sources of which no one knows.

Why is the king emerging from the smoke of the oil and the corridors of the big companies in fear of the people's demonstrations. The question contains the answer. The man from afar has no connection with the people's problems and concerns. Anyone who does not feel the people's problems is certainly not one of them. How can any one of us expect this man to feel as we do? Is this not impossible? Did Marie Antoinette really feel the people's hunger when she told her advisers to tell the hungry to eat cake for lack of bread?

The Lebanese strove long to have an army. They sent their sons to volunteer for the army. They sent their sons to enlist so that the homeland might look like other

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countries. Then came the man who wanted to profit from all these efforts to serve his position and remain in power. Why did this man not send the army to the south to confront the Israeli occupation and side with its kin, people, and the Resistance fighter there? Why did he not equip the army to enable it to play its role in liberating the occupied land? Does he not have funds to purchase equipment? What he wants is to make a profit and gains, not to lose and pay. This is the logic of businessmen who look for profit. But the logic of rulers and politicians must be different. A politician is governed by the logic of national dignity and the pride of the homeland and people. Where is Lebanon in all of this?

The ruler was afraid of the people's anger. Why not? He does not know the people and it was he who carried out the 13 September massacre and threatened to do the same on 29 February. The government found no means of quelling the people other than ordering the army to ban its kin and people from the streets on the pretext of protecting security from demonstrations and anarchy. Thus the people who sacrificed and still sacrifice for the homeland's freedom, dignity, and democracy have become anarchists and are in the dock. [passage omitted]

This situation heralds the start of the new order for Lebanon as a prelude to joining the new Mediterranean system. Things are even more complicated. It is not simply a case of a government unable to remove the oppression of the poor class. If it were, the government would have spoken frankly and told the people: These are our resources. It would have called for continuing the dialogue, not breaking it and seeking the help of the army. [passage omitted]

The government did not want the hungry people to open their mouths and ask for bread. It did not want the hungry to assemble and say together that they want their freedom, bread, and no one to steal from them. This voice frightens the government because it is the voice of right and of the vast majority, not of a politicized handful. If it were the voice of a handful of people, why all the fear? The army was ordered to deploy in Tyre, al-Nabatiyah, and Sidon. Why was it not ordered to advance to Jazzin and the border strip to liberate them? Why was it not ordered to arrest Antoine Lahd [South Lebanese Army commander] and his gang who collaborate with the enemy? Perhaps Antoine Lahd, who threatened to divulge secrets, knows the facts and is awaiting the appropriate time to reveal them.

The General Labor Federation [GLF] did well to suspend the decision to stage demonstrations. It did not want workers and teachers to clash with their fathers and brothers. A soldier is ordered to fire at anyone, even at his father, and he cannot disobey orders. But a father can withdraw and avoid clashes, which the ruler wants. [passage omitted]

Tel Aviv and Washington may thus say that the government in Beirut is strong and is qualified for partnership and negotiations. All the rulers wanted from the mourning and execution of freedom and democracy was to improve the official Lebanese position for joining the Mediterranean market. This would increase the profit of the big merchant and sovereign who is capable of issuing decrees. The citizen is asked to put his head on the block and to remain patient with the executioner so that he can show that he can control things, ban demonstrations, restrict freedom, and entertain Shim'on Peres, who wants to ride the horse and who reigns supreme in the field alone.

Lebanon: Phalangist Leader Criticizes Media Law

NC0103111296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Phalangist Party leader Dr. George Sa'adah described the decree on the need for media organizations to meet certain terms and conditions as an innovation. He told the Voice of Lebanon that this decree was enacted to create a rift between the government and public opinion, which defends freedoms. He said that there is a big irony in entrusting the army command to impose a curfew to block any confrontation and a government that makes and announces this decree. He noted that 29 February has become a historic day that everyone is talking about. He said that the people speak in good terms of those who called for strikes and demonstrations and speak ill of the government, which made use of the opportunity to pass this decree.

Sa'adah said that he was absolutely not surprised by the issuance of this decree, because he knows full well the mentality that runs the country and the policy of seizing opportunities it pursues.

Lebanon: Iran's Sheykholeslam Visits Beirut; AL-SAFIR Comments

LD2902210996 Tehran IRNA in English 2009 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Feb. 29, IRNA — The Iranian deputy foreign minister, Hoseyn Sheykholeslam paid a short official visit to Lebanon, meeting the Lebanese president, the cabinet, members of Lebanese parliament, foreign minister and the secretary general of Hizballah party here Thursday.

AL-SAFIR, the Lebanese daily wrote that the official visit by Sheykholeslam is a crushing answer to the

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rancorous policy pursued by the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The daily wrote on saying that moments before the Iranian deputy minister had a meeting with the Lebanese foreign minister, the new US ambassador to Lebanon had presented his credentials to Faris Buwayz. AL-SAFIR indicated the presentation of the credentials coincided with the renewal of prohibition of the United States citizens to Lebanon on the pretext that Lebanon is an unsafe country 'as security has not been restored [in] that country'. The daily finally concluded that such a reaction by the United States has made the Lebanese government officials very unhappy.

The paper then wrote that the remarks made by the Iranian deputy foreign minister who talked about the strengthening of relations between Iran and Lebanon, emphasizing the policy of continued resistance against the Zionists. [sentence as received]

AL-SAFIR finally stated that the three day official visit by the first vice president, Dr. Hasan Habibi, to Syria is a turning point in the relation between Iran and Syria. It concluded saying that all the rumors on relations between Iran and Syria turning cold have evaporated and the United States which looked forward to fully exploit the situation to its own interest, has become despondent and its hope turned bleak.

Lebanon: Iranian Aide Praises Resistance to Israeli 'Occupation'

MM2902195796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Feb 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Says in Beirut: We Favor Reinforcing Resistance to Israeli Occupation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-HAYAH — President Ilyas al-Hirawi received yesterday an invitation from Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to attend the ceremony marking the inauguration of a railroad line between Iran and China. The invitation was conveyed by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykholeslam.

The president received the Iranian official in the presence of Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh.

Sheykholeslam said following the meeting: "I am very happy to be speaking to you now. And I send sincere greetings to the Lebanese people and the fighters fighting the occupation. Resistance is a legitimate right for Lebanon. It is the only language the Israeli occupier understands. I brought with me a message from Sheykh Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Iranian republic, to his brother Ilyas al-Hirawi, president of the Lebanese republic. I discussed with his excellency issues on which we have common stands, including the Lebanese position on what is happening in southern Lebanon, namely the Israeli attacks and crimes, and the resistance to the occupation."

He pointed out that "our cultural relations go back to the pre-Islamic era. There were relations between us. And of course, Lebanon as a people and state has deep roots. We are proud that, after the emergence of Islam, the Shiite sect moved to Iran from Lebanon, especially from Jabal 'Amil. Actually today, and through the resistance and steadfastness epic staged by the Lebanese people against the Israeli occupation, we feel that we too belong to this epic and resistance."

Asked about the U.S. attempt to link the lifting of the blockade on Lebanon to the disarming of Hizballah, and U.S. criticism of Iran as the main sponsor of the party, he said: "The United States should first work to remove the Israeli occupation from Lebanon in order to grant credibility to what it says. I believe that no weapon in the world is as legitimate and legal as the resistance weapon in Lebanon. This is the view of the Lebanese Government as well."

Then the Iranian deputy foreign minister visited Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at the head of a delegation from the Iranian Foreign Ministry. The Iranian ambassador attended the meeting.

Sheykholeslam said following the meeting: "I am very happy to have met with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. I discussed with him various issues, including ways of strengthening bilateral relations and the preparations for his excellency's awaited visit to Iran, in addition to reinforcing and strengthening the resistance, that is, the resistance to the Israeli occupation, of course. The national unity and security stability which are evident in Lebanon provide an opportunity to establish the best of economic relations between the two countries."

He said that "economic relations — official and nonofficial — between the two countries have improved." He added: "We will do all we can to strengthen the resistance, which contains within itself glory for Islam, the Arab nation, Arabism, and Lebanon. There is seldom an equal to this resistance in terms of the heroism and bravery displayed against the Zionist enemy."

The Iranian official also visited Nabih Birri, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. He said following the meeting: "While resistance is your right and is legitimate and legal, because it is staged against an occupier and usurper in southern Lebanon, it is also playing a parallel role, especially for the people who are daily subjected to bombardment and aggressive and criminal acts. The

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resistance is also playing a role in safeguarding the rights of the Palestinian people as well — which is itself a model characteristic of the Lebanese people."

He pointed to a possible visit to Lebanon by Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri after the legislative elections in Iran.

The Iranian official also visited the Foreign Ministry, where he met with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. The meeting was attended by the Iranian ambassador; al-Hajj Mahmud Hashemi, head of the 8th department [al-da'irah al-thaminah] at the Iranian Foreign Ministry; Ghazanfar Rukn Abadi, third secretary at the embassy; and Ambassador Milhim Mastu, director of Minister Buwayz's office.

Lebanon: Officials Meet Iranian Officials in Damascus

NC0103074496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Walid Junblatt, minister of displaced persons affairs, has met Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi in Damascus to review regional developments. Habibi also met Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din, chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, and the Amal Movement's Political Bureau and Executive Committee delegation. They discussed the situation in Lebanon in general and in south Lebanon in particular in view of the continuing Israeli acts of aggression and the Resistance role in confronting the occupation. They stressed the need for solidarity and unity to confront the Zionist enemy's plans.

Lebanon: Habibi Holds Talks With Junblatt During Damascus Visit

LD2902181896 Tehran IRNA in English 1705 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Syria, Feb. 29, IRNA — Iran's First Deputy President Hasan Habibi told President of Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon Walid Junblatt here today that once Muslim states establish friendly relations between themselves on the principles of Islam they would have substantially contributed to regional peace and security. The visiting Iranian official who was receiving Junblatt at the Iranian embassy here said that certain world powers were campaigning for the Zionist culture in the region which culture, he said, was against human values and promotive of tension only.

Junblatt said in response that for the Arab nations and other regional governments to secure their independence would require promotion of multi-facetted relations with national and Islamic forces in the region. The Lebanese official said that Muslim forces in the region should aim all their efforts at checking Zionist infiltration.

Lebanon: Buwayz on French International Force Participation

NC2902175096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following his meeting with French Defense Minister Charles Millon this afternoon, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said that Lebanon does not object to the participation of a friendly and influential power such as France in an international force on the borders with Israel when there is a withdrawal. He added that the Syrians, Americans, and Israelis have expressed an acceptance of this in principle.

Millon left Beirut tonight. He was seen off by Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul. [passage omitted]

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Syria: Joint Committee With Iran Holds Final Session

JN2902154496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Higher Joint Syrian-Iranian Committee held its final session at 1100 today. Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam led the Syrian delegation, and Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi, led the Iranian delegation.

Attending the meeting on the Syrian side were Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Syrian Ambassador in Tehran Ahmad al-Hasan. Attending on the Iranian side were Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh-ol-Eslam, and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed all aspects of the regional situation, relations between the two friendly countries, and means of promoting them. The two sides' viewpoints were in agreement on all the discussed issues.

Syria: Joint Committee With Iran Notes 'Identical' Views

MM0103100796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Iran Seeking Coordination Strategy Among Hamas, Jihad, and Hizballah"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The joint Syrian-Iranian Committee concluded its meetings in Damascus yesterday. The meetings were chaired by Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Iranian Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi. The committee stressed that "the two countries' views were identical."

While the Syrian official spokesman said that the meetings stressed "the two countries' joint stands" on all the issues raised, sources close to the Iranian delegation said that the Iranian vice president devoted more time to side meetings with representatives of the Palestinian and Islamic resistance. Iran is seeking to achieve a coordination strategy among Hizballah, the Jihad, and Hamas.

The Iranian source said that Habibi's meetings with the rejectionist Palestinian factions and leaders of the Islamic resistance in southern Lebanon fall within the framework of the Iranian move in opposition to the Oslo agreements between the PLO and Israel.

In the context of these meetings the Iranian vice president stressed to a Palestinian delegation comprising secretaries general of the Palestinian factions opposed to the Oslo agreement that Iran would continue to oppose the agreements signed between Yasir 'Arafat and Israel and support the Palestinian people's struggle.

While Habibi stressed to a high-ranking Lebanese Hizballah delegation — headed by Hasan Nasrallah and Husayn al-Musawi — "Iran's full support" for Hizballah "until the liberation of southern Lebanon from the Israeli occupation," the Iranian source said yesterday that Habibi stressed during his meeting with the Islamic Jihad and Hamas "the unity of the resistance and the continuation of military operations against the Israelis."

Lebanese sources in Damascus said yesterday that the Iranian vice president promised to continue Tehran's "absolute" support for the resistance and pointed to the importance of uniting its ranks and coordinating its operations. [passage omitted]

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: Foreign Minister Opens Regional Human Rights Meeting

BK2702135596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 27 Feb 96

[Report by "a Post reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Kathmandu, Feb 26 — The fourth Asia-Pacific workshop on regional Human Rights arrangements began here today with a view to charting out a common course for the promotion of human rights in Asia and the Pacific region.

The three-day workshop organized by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in cooperation with His Majesty's Government of Nepal is attend by representatives from some 40 countries of the region. The workshop was opened by Foreign Minister Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani.

Minister Dr Lohani in his welcoming address reiterated the firm belief of Nepal that all human rights are interdependent and indivisible and must be advanced with equal priority.

Dr Lohani said human beings are the centre of all development endeavours, the preservation of their rights therefore deserves our foremost attention.

Delivering a welcoming speech at the inaugural function, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, said reaffirming, the universality of human rights standards and restoring the symmetry of human rights discourse were vital for reaching consensus in the matters of protection of people's rights.

Lasso who arrived here on Sunday to attend the meet stressed that the framework for human rights protection must be based upon the universally agreed logic of the Vienna Declaration of 1993. The Vienna declaration said all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. It said, "International community must treat human rights globally, and in a fair manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis."

"The old, divisive notions that some categories of rights are somehow more fundamental than others should no longer be cherished in the present context," Lasso said. He said strengthening regional cooperation, consolidating civil societies, establishing independent national institutions and working for the prevention of rights abuses were the other fundamental requirements for the protection of human rights. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Missile Attack on Kabul Leaves 5 Wounded

LD2902151896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Pol-e Kheshti communal mosque center yesterday sustained damage following the Taleban's missile attacks on eastern parts of Kabul.

A Central News Unit correspondent reports from Kabul that in the past three months the mosque has twice became the targets of the Taleban's missiles attacks. A number of people who were performing prayers in the mosque were wounded.

The available reports say that five people were wounded yesterday when missiles hit the central residential areas of Kabul.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Opposition Announces 'Non-Stop' Protest Campaign

BK2902134496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1314 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Report by Golam Tahaboor]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Feb 29 (AFP)— Bangladesh troops opened fire on bomb-wielding opposition activists in the city of Chittagong Thursday [29 February], killing one and injuring 20 as tension grew after the arrest of the city's mayor.

The paramilitary troops, who had been called in to quell day-long rioting following the arrest of Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury Wednesday, clashed with activists from the opposition Awami League in the port city's downtown New Market area, witnesses said.

Some of the activists threw home-made bombs as they attempted to pass through the area, they said. Hospital sources said three of the injured were in serious condition.

The latest death brought the toll in anti-government violence and opposition protests since the weekend to 13.

The incident occurred as a day-long strike called by the opposition to protest at the arrest of the mayor went into force. Residents said streets were empty of traffic and shops and markets were closed.

Opposition activists went on the rampage following the arrest of Chowdhury, attacking government offices,

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burning cars and markets and trying to loot businesses and several banks.

Troops in armoured vehicles moved into the streets shortly before midnight, forcing the demonstrators to disperse.

Chowdhury, a member of the Awami League, was arrested Wednesday at his office and was taken to a nearby police station and then to high security prison before being transferred early Thursday to a district jail in Comilla.

His arrest was the latest in a series of detentions of opposition leaders since general elections on February 15 that were marred by an opposition boycott and allegations of ballot fraud.

Chowdhury has been accused by local ruling party leaders of fuelling anti-government violence in the port city.

Witnesses said police at the downtown Kotwali police station Thursday fired shots in the air to chase rampaging protesters. Two policemen and a militia man at the station were wounded Wednesday after it came under attack.

Opposition activists in Chittagong also fired shots and exploded home-made bombs in empty roads and lanes Thursday, officials said.

Official sources said that the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles took over security in the port city Thursday after local police failed to quell the violence.

No fresh protests or clashes were reported in the capital Dhaka and other Bangladeshi cities and towns Thursday.

In Dhaka, offices and businesses reopened following several days of a nationwide shutdown called by the opposition, which is seeking to oust Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and hold what it calls neutral and fair elections.

Zia late Wednesday told a group of local journalists that her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government would resume talks with the opposition to end the national political crisis, marked by two years of opposition street campaigns to force her resignation.

But the opposition rejected Zia's earlier gestures for talks following the weekend arrest of six of its leaders, and said that anulling the election — dominated by the BNP — and Zia's resignation would solve the political impasse.

The Awami League and its allies in the Jatiya Party and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party are to hold rallies here late Thursday to announce further "non-cooperation campaign" actions. Press reports indicated that fresh protests could be delayed until after an annual Moslem congregation, or Biswa Ijtema, due to start Saturday at suburban Tongi town.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1333 GMT on 29 February adds: "Bangladesh's main opposition parties said Thursday they would start a non-stop protest campaign from next week to force Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government to resign.

["At a Dhaka rally, the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed said the opposition was suspending its anti-government campaigns until March 8, to allow a three day mass Muslim gathering to be held.

["She said the 'non-cooperation campaign' would resume after and continue until the fall of Zia's 'illegal' government. Till now, general strikes and other action have normally been for periods of two or three days."]

India

India: Delhi To Take Steps To Check 'Pakistan-Sponsored Terrorism'

BK0103033896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has made it clear that it will take all necessary steps to check Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. In a statement in New Delhi yesterday, an official spokesman said that there has been a marked increase in the dispatch of arms and narcotics in India over the past six months after Islamabad failed in its designs in Punjab and Kashmir. Some specific cases of arrests of Pakistani and other nationals smuggling arms were brought to the notice of Pakistan authorities in an aide-memoire given to the deputy high commissioner of Pakistan, Mr. Khalid Khattak, in New Delhi on Monday this week, but Pakistan has chosen to reject the documented protest. The spokesman said the response is no surprise, as this was in line with Pakistan's policy of denying its support to spread terror in India while vigorously aiding groups engaged in subversive activities. Such activities must cease immediately; and all steps will be taken by New Delhi to defend its interests and security.

India: Supreme Court Strips Prime Minister of Control Over CBI

BK0103114896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1135 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 1 (AFP) — India's Supreme Court on Friday [1 March] took away Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's control

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of a federal agency probing a huge scandal involving national leaders and opposition politicians.

The court ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) not to take instructions from the prime minister while investigating the 21-million-dollar bribery scandal which has hit virtually all political parties.

"The court directed that the CBI shall take no instructions or furnish any particulars of the case to any authority interested or likely to be affected by the outcome of the probe," officials quoted the judicial order as saying.

Judges J.S. Verma, S.P. Bharucha and S.C. Sen while hearing a petition on the scandal freed the CBI from "overall administrative control" of the prime minister, who holds the department among some 13 other portfolios.

"This step is to eliminate any impression of bias and avoid erosion of credibility of the investigations by the CBI, and also any reasonable impression of lack of fairness and objectivity on the part of the CBI," it said.

The landmark judgement came on a petition filed by a civil rights activist, Vinit Narain, who argued that Rao should not be in charge of the CBI since his name too has been linked by the opposition to the murky bribery scandal.

The CBI has charged politicians from Rao's ruling Congress (I) and the opposition with taking hefty bribes from New Delhi-based businessman Surendra Jain.

Twenty-four people have been charged from a list of 115 suspects named in the sweeping scandal.

Arrest warrants against a total of nine politicians — including three former federal ministers — were issued by a judge on Thursday.

Most of the politicians caught assert the charges are politically motivated and part of a smear campaign ahead of general elections to be held by May at the latest.

Businessman Jain is charged with paying 21 million dollars between 1988 and 1991 to politicians and top bureaucrats. The payments were listed in two coded diaries, unearthed during a CBI raid.

India: 'Top Militant Leaders' in Kashmir Reaffirm Call For Talks

BK0103102096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Five top militant leaders in Jammu and Kashmir have reiterated their call for an unconditional dialogue with the central government for an amicable solution to the Kashmir issue. They have also announced the setting up of a new political party outside the Hurriyat Conference for this purpose.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu yesterday, former chief of the militant outfit, Muslim Janbaz Force, (Baper Bader); former deputy chief of the Hizbul Mujahidin Imran Rahi; former chief of the Al-Barq Bilal Lodhi; former deputy supreme commander of Al-Jihad Bashir Ahmad Wani; and former amir-i-ala [chief] of the Muslim Mujahidin Ghulam Ali Lone said that consultations within different militant outfits are presently going on for floating a new political party. They said the Hurriyat Conference has failed to find any political solution to the present situation.

India: Mixed Reaction to Interim Budget Noted

BK2802162496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has said that today's interim budget reflects the achievements made by the government in the economic field. In an exclusive interview to All India Radio, Mr. Narasimha Rao said that the new policies followed by his government during the last five years have proved correct as the people have got relief and benefit from the policies. Stressing the need for the continuation of the reforms, he said we have to find ways to tackle new challenges but no fundamental changes in the policies are required.

The opposition has described the interim budget as election- oriented, while the Congress-I members termed it as a document of success of the economic policies of the government. The CPI [Communist Party of India] leader, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, criticized the budget alleging that scandals like hawala [illegal money transfer] and other financial scams have not been mentioned in it at all.

Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], said the interim budget presents only half truth about inflation and other performances. The Samata Party leader, Mr. George Fernandes, and Somnath Chatterjee, CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], termed the budget as an election manifesto of the ruling party.

Mr. Ram Niwas Mirdha of the Congress-I described it as a budget in the right direction. His party colleagues — Mr. Mani Shanker Iyer, Mr. Pavan Kumar Bansal and Mr. V.S. Vijay Raghaban — said the budget ensures the tempo of development of employment generation. Mr. Jaipal Reddy, Janata Dal, said the claims made in the budget are not based on fact. Mr. E. Ahmad of the Indian Union Muslim League said the all-time low inflation and the economic recovery are major successes of the interim budget.

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The Confederation of Indian Industry has welcomed the ambitious targets of growth, employment, exports, and production as envisaged in the interim budget.

Iran

Iran: Habibi Says No Conspiracy Can Disrupt Iran-Syria Relations

LD2902174496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] First Vice President Hasan Habibi returned home tonight after a three-day visit to Syria during which he held talks with that country's officials. In an interview with a Central News Unit correspondent, Habibi described the results of his visit as fruitful and he said: During the visit the two countries' current affairs, the Iraqi issue, and other regional developments were discussed. He added: Concerning economic developments between the two countries, it was decided that a Syrian delegation will visit Tehran.

Finally, Mr. Habibi described Iran-Syria ties as strategic and he stressed: No conspiracy can disrupt the two countries' relations.

Iran: Habibi Says Iran Backs Iraq's Territorial Integrity

LD2902193396 Tehran IRNA in English 1834 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 29, IRNA — First Deputy President of Iran Hasan Habibi returned to Tehran at the conclusion of his three-day visit to Damascus and in a brief interview at Tehran Mehrabad Airport said that the Islamic Republic had assured Iraqi groups in Damascus that the Islamic government was partial to the territorial integrity of Iraq.

Habibi said he also had a three-hour meeting with Syrian Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zubi at which they discussed Iran-Syria relations. He said Iran and Syria also decided that a joint commission of the two countries resume its task. In his visit to Damascus Habibi was accompanied also by Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Iran: Daily Reports on Bahrain Government's Response to Unrest

NC2902210596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Feb 96 p 16

[IRNA Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Citing some Bahraini residents, news agencies report that following demonstrations in Bahrain a large number of Law Enforcement forces have been stationed in the streets of Manama.

According to AFP reporting from Nicosia, armored vehicles and a large number of military police units were patrolling the streets that were the scene of demonstrations on Thursday [22 February] night and units armed with machine guns were posted around government buildings in Manama.

This eyewitness report says that antiriot police in Bahrain arrested a number of Bahraini youths who had not participated in 'Id al-Fitr celebrations and had donned black clothes in protest of the government's policies.

According to these sources, the anti-riot police fired tear gas shells and plastic bullets in the areas of (Diyah) and Abu Saybi in the vicinity of Manama in order to disperse the demonstrators.

The report adds: The streets of Manama were quite deserted compared to the same period last year, when they were crowded with people celebrating 'Id al-Fitr. Some violent explosions took place in some parts of Bahrain, especially in Sitra and al-Diraz.

A spokesman for the Bahrain Liberation Movement announced that the Movement had sent a petition to world leaders, requesting their support for the "legitimate demands" of the Bahraini people. He said that more than 10,000 persons had signed the petition, the text of which has been disseminated in Bahrain.

Iran: U.S. 'Nasty Anti-Iran Policy,' CIA Chief's Remarks Criticized

NC2902202896 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 24 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Stop Baseless Charges Against Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nowadays, it has become ritualistic for U.S. officials to lambaste Iran, China, Pakistan and India in their public speeches and official reports.

The latest such report is that of the CIA Director John Deutch. In his report to the Senate, Deutch says, inter alia, "Iran is a major sponsor of terrorism throughout the world... We are alert to Iranian efforts to acquire modern weapons and technology that they need to advance their weapons of mass destruction programs."

This is not the first time U.S. officials levy baseless charges against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Such baseless accusations have been so extensively uttered by U.S. authorities that U.S. officials themselves who knowingly spread such accusations have forgotten that

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they have no foundation. This was why, before his visit to Moscow last summer, President Clinton boasted that he was going to convince the Russian authorities to stop cooperation with Iran in nuclear technology.

But his visit ended in a fiasco. Russian officials rebuffed him for two reasons: Firstly, Russia is a sovereign, independent state; it is not a proxy of the U.S. Secondly, Clinton went to Moscow empty-handed. Hence, the Russians virtually did not heed his statements.

The CIA chief may be suffering from Alzheimer's disease as he has been a witness to the failure of a policy followed by Bill Clinton.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said a couple of months ago that if the U.S. proves in a single instance that Iran supports terrorism, we will accept all U.S. charges in this regard. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani made the statement boldly. Unfortunately, despite its inability to do so, the White House has not ceased its nonsensical anti-Iran policy.

Despite its geographic vastness, the world has shrunk to a village. Transparency is one of the salient features of our world today. People are not so naive as to accept everything on its face value. Enough is enough. U.S. officials should stop this nasty anti-Iran policy. It won't work.

Instead of increasing hostility with a strong, sovereign, independent nation, try to understand it.

Iran: Commentary Views U.S. Trade Sanctions on PRC

LD2902225896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has called on the U.S. imports-exports bank to hold grants of loans and financial credits to the American companies which have trade ties with China. This should take place within the next 30 days. The U.S. government is scheduled to make decisions on the imposition of new trade sanctions on China next month. Clinton is under severe pressure from the side of the U.S. Republicans. The Republicans demand intensified trade sanctions against China.

The United States has accused China of having clandestinely sold the kind of magnet applied in the manufacture of nuclear weapons to Pakistan. Washington has also claimed that despite last year's agreement between the two countries, Beijing continues to copy and sell the U.S. made computer software. China has rejected all these charges.

Political observers believe that the U.S. charges against China takes place for two reasons. The first reason is the complicated and extending rivalries between the Republicans and Democrats at the threshold of the U.S. presidential elections. Through intensifying their pressure on Clinton, the Republicans plan to produce new obstacles in the way of the Democrats' foreign policy. The second reason is that the United States has been convinced that China's economic growth as well as extension of her political ties are both threatening the United States' strategic interests in Asia.

In order to bring China's active political and economic presence in the world under control, the United States has placed the policy of controlling China and restricting her activities in the agenda of its works. In view of the present situation, Washington attempts to increase pressures on Beijing and prevent China from its jump towards a developed economic and political power in the world. This is specially under conditions when the United States feels concerned over formation of special and exclusive ties among mighty Asian states. Senior Chinese officials, however, consider the United States' policy of controlling Beijing as a kind of blackmail and continued domination-seeking by colonialism. They also believe that the U.S. policies increase tensions in the international relations.

The new attempts by the United States for the imposition of new sanctions on Beijing will add to the tensions between the two world powers. Big American companies which have invested in China say that Washington's policies are against their interests and therefore ask for a review in these policies. But it seems that the rival wings in the Unites States maintain to place the issue of sanctions against China in their policies in order to win the votes of the American people in the future presidential elections.

Iran: Need for Peace in Afghanistan Seen

NC0103091696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Feb 96 p 16

[Unattributed commentary: "The Riddle of Peace in Afghanistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tripartite conference of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, aiming to end the tension in Kabul-Islamabad relations, has opened in Tehran and is being attended by high-ranking officials of the three countries.

Any effort to improve relations between Islamabad and Kabul is a step toward peace in Afghanistan, because Pakistan has become a major front in the Afghan crisis and trained groups are acting as "pressure levers"

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in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's domestic tranquility and stability depends somewhat on the type of relations with Islamabad.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Pakistan placed its relations with Afghanistan on the basis of its economic interests in Central Asia. Pakistan has shown friendship only to those governments in Kabul that have turned Afghanistan into a "secure thoroughfare" linking Pakistan with Central Asia. This is where we should seek the main secret behind Pakistan's support for the Taleban Group—one of the main elements in the instability and chaos in Afghanistan during the past 16 months.

Tension in Pakistani-Afghan relations started with the attack by the people of Kabul on the Pakistani Embassy on 15 Shahrivar [6 September]. The attack, revealing the Afghan people's rage and dissatisfaction with Islamabad's policies in their country, left one dead and at least 26 injured diplomats and employees of the Pakistan Embassy and sparked off vengeful acts by the Pakistani Government against Afghanistan.

The tension in Islamabad-Kabul relations has darkened the horizon of any regional cooperation for an Afghan solution. This is where the Tehran conference gets its significance as a step to help establish stability in Afghanistan.

Despite moves to end the crisis in Pakistani-Afghan relations, most of the efforts to solve the Afghan problem have not ended favorably.

1. Some of the plans and solutions yielded no results because of a lack of understanding of the dimensions of the crisis and because the realities of Afghan society were not considered.

2. Some of the plans and solutions did not yield results because those who proposed them were under foreign pressure and their interests were preferred over the interests of the Afghan Government and nation.

3. Some of the plans failed because the governments that initiated them were not impartial.

4. Some failed because they considered "tranquility" without paying much attention to the "vindication of rights."

5. Peace plans have largely been thwarted because the Afghan rebel groups thirst for power and superiority and because party interests are preferred over those of the people of Afghanistan.

With the region in need of stability and tranquility and peace in Afghanistan ensuring much of the region's stability, any effort to consolidate regional cooperation will, apart from consolidating political and economic relations among the regional countries, be an effective step toward peace and stability in Afghanistan. The conference of the representatives of Tehran, Islamabad, and Kabul in Tehran should be viewed within this context.

Iran: Commentary Views 'Arafat Decision To Collect Hamas Weapons

LD2902145396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1105 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following the increasing wave of arrests and detention of members of the Islamic groups, Yasir 'Arafat, head of the self-rule region, yesterday set a deadline for the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members to hand in their weapons to the his forces. 'Arafat warned that after the deadline, the police would attack homes of Hamas members to confiscate their weapons.

'Arafat's decision to set a deadline is in fact his response to demands of the Zionist regime. In the wake of the two explosions in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres of Israel asked 'Arafat to intensify suppression against the Palestinian combative groups in Gaza and the West Bank. Peres threatened that if 'Arafat were to show negligence, his authority in running the self-rule region would be curtailed and that the Zionist regime would not withdraw its forces from Hebron. [passage omitted]

'Arafat's positive response to the demands of the Zionist regime and the deadline given to Hamas is a measure to please this regime and to secure progress in the peace talks. But this measure can further isolate and undermine 'Arafat's position before the Palestinian nation. When 'Arafat was trying to justify his acceptance of the compromise accord, he used to raise a positive aspect of this accord, which would have enabled him to make independent decisions in the self-rule region. The policies implemented by Israel, however, clearly proved the absence of such independence.

In view of the fact that the designers of the compromise plan need 'Arafat as an individual with whom they can talk and gain their desired concessions, they feel compelled to maintain his status so as to give some superficial legitimacy to the future accords. Putting pressure on 'Arafat to suppress the Palestinian groups, however, would naturally increase pessimism among the Palestinian nation and can further discredit the main pawn of the so-called peace process. The policy will also make the peace process more vulnerable.

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Iran: UN Human Rights Figure Capithorne Interviewed

NC2802205096 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 17 Feb 96 p 16

["Exclusive" interview with Maurice Danby Capithorne, special UN rapporteur on human rights, by unidentified ETTELA'AT correspondent in Tehran on 15 February]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [ETTELA'AT] Our thanks for accepting our invitation for an interview. My first question is: What are the general criteria for human rights (regardless of regional values, ideologies, and beliefs) from the UN's perspective?

[Capithorne] If we are to discuss the question of human rights we should first discuss the documents and principles the governments are pledged to abide by. Hence the concept of human rights is linked to international commitments that the governments have pledged. For example Canada and Iran have not pledged to abide by the same documents but have accepted different principles.

[ETTELA'AT] In the documents that you mention, are national values and regional beliefs taken into consideration? Or are these general regulations that have been compiled without any regard for regional and national beliefs and values that all are obligated to follow?

[Capithorne] In my opinion, culture and religion are the elements that are kept in mind when individuals wish to abide by human rights. Hence, the two factors of religion and culture can be used to define the connotations of human rights.

[ETTELA'AT] I believe that we do not have any common definition for adherence to mandatory human rights that would be acceptable to all nations. Therefore we should detail these definitions while keeping in view national values and beliefs.

[Capithorne] If we base our discussion on the UN Human Rights Charter, however, with regard to Iran, in addition to the UN Human Rights Charter we must take into consideration the agreements that Iran has subscribed to. Then we can include the elements of culture and religion. I mean that we cannot eliminate the Human Rights Charter and other agreements (such as the civil and political rights agreement, or the social and economic rights agreement) and only discuss human rights. In other words, the structure of human rights and the international charters of civil and political rights, and the social and economic rights agreements are the bases and starting point; all cultural and religious values are based on them.

[ETTELA'AT] If the general values of human rights are in conflict with national and local values, how can this conflict be resolved?

[Capithorne] One should work on them.

[ETTELA'AT] As the UN Human Rights Commission rapporteur, you believe that if there is a difference between the general principles of human rights and the national and local values of nations, the issue should be studied.

[Capithorne] Of course, the countries can organize their commitments to human rights in a manner that is in harmony with their religion and culture. I should add however that this is an issue that should be raised with the Human Rights Committee at Geneva and not the Human Rights Commission. [passage omitted]

I can cite an example. Many countries bring up the death penalty at the Human Rights Committee sessions. Of course, international conventions only mention this penalty in connection with very major crimes that may not even be considered crimes in some countries. Such discussions are held in order to ascertain which are the really serious crimes.

[ETTELA'AT] This means that the various crimes are categorized and their punishments are discussed?

[Capithorne] No, the discussion is of crimes that are considered serious within the cultural framework of a particular country and should therefore be assessed.

[ETTELA'AT] So you accept the basis of this discussion and that this should be reviewed?

[Capithorne] Yes that is how it should be.

[ETTELA'AT] Currently, human rights are being used as a political concept and as an instrument to pressure countries. For example, some actions may be considered violations of human rights in some countries but even more serious actions may take place in other countries but are not objected to by the UN Human Rights Commission. For example, there are certain specific crimes and punishments in Iran that are considered violations of human rights which also exist in other countries, where they are not considered violations of human rights. How do you explain this contradiction? Do you not believe that a discriminatory attitude on the human rights concept has politicized the issue and raised doubts regarding the intentions of the UN officials?

[Capithorne] I understand your question. The issue you have raised is not confined to any particular country. Here I would like to tell you that in the Human Rights Committee, Canada is second in the

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list of countries violating human rights and is severely criticized. [passage omitted]

[ETTELA'AT] Thus, mankind should reach a common definition of human rights, and discussion is a suitable method for reaching such a definition.

[Capithorne] Perhaps we will be able to pursue this discussion some other time. I wish to add that our talk has been very fruitful and informative and I say this with all sincerity.

[ETTELA'AT] We thank you for your time.

Iran: Sudan Calls For Further Solidarity Among Muslim Countries

LD2902133196 Tehran IRNA in English 1222 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 29, IRNA — Visiting secretary general of Sudan's National Assembly Qazi Salah al-Din in a meeting with vice-speaker of Majles Hasan Rohani here Thursday called for further unity among Muslim countries to counter plots hatched by the global arrogance against Islam.

Rohani, referring to Iran and Sudan as two independent Muslim countries, said formation of an Islamic government in Sudan was one of the most important developments in North Africa after triumph of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

Rohani said that the global arrogance has always tried to create problems for the two Muslim countries of Iran and Sudan, but no doubt that the power of a nation would overcome all plots.

He considered recent statement, issued by the UN Security Council in condemnation of Sudan, as a prelude to a new plot against the country.

The Iranian official expressed hope that Khartoum would be capable of overcoming such plots through its political activities.

Rohani, also head of the foreign policy commission of Majles, called for exchange of high-ranking delegations between Iran and Sudan to further promote Tehran-Khartoum ties in various fields.

Iran: Japanese Company To Take Part in Gas Projects

LD2902161496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Japan is participating in Iran's gas supply projects. The director of Japan's JAGC oil company, who is currently in Tehran, announced the news, saying the company is holding talks with Iran's national oil company [National Iranian Oil Company, NIOC] for the extension of three gas supply projects in Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to a REUTERS report, Japan's participation in Iran's oil projects comes at a time when the U.S. President has threatened that even non-American companies would be prosecuted should they conclude any oil and gas accords with Iran.

The director of the Japanese company in Tehran, in a conversation stressed that U.S. threats to impose sanctions on the parties involved in signing contracts with Iran have not affected talks held between Japanese and Iranian national oil companies.

Iran's national oil company signed a $60-million agreement for extension of sea oil and gas (?works) with the French company of Total last July.

Iran: Velayati Interviewed on Outcome of Talks With Tajik Head

NC0103090296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 1 Mar 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by correspondent Qorbani in Dushanbe; date not given—recorded; the interview is transmitted by telephone and only Velayati's remarks are broadcast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Velayati] Following the outbreak of tragic conflicts between rebel groups and the Tajik Government, the Islamic Republic of Iran successfully mediated between the two sides. The only talks to yield results were those held in Tehran— the second round—attended by the presidents of the two countries, during which an agreement was signed followed by a cease-fire. The cease-fire ended three days ago. All our efforts focused on renewing the cease-fire, which we achieved during my meeting with the Tajik president. In view of our earlier discussions with the rebel groups, we hope this cease-fire will be agreed on by both sides and will continue until Khordad [month ending 21 June 1996].

Another request we made to the Tajik president was that he agree to the symbolic [preceding word in French as heard] release of prisoners of war from both sides. This too was agreed upon. Another request was that he agree to resume talks in Ashgabat or any other city in the region. He agreed with this too. We gained Rakhmanov's agreement to accept any representative or representatives appointed by the rebel groups and their attendance at an extraordinary session in the next few days in the Tajik Parliament when they can say what they have to say. Fortunately these talks and negotiations will be simultaneously broadcast by

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the Tajik mass media, which will be a very good opportunity for both sides to inform the Tajik public of their views.

Iran: Yemen Signs Oil Exploration, Refinery Construction Accord

LD0103113796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of four days of talks between a high-ranking Yemeni Government delegation and our country's officials, and following the delegation's visit to Iranian oil and gas installations, a memorandum of understanding was signed today concerning oil and gas exploration in Yemen, the reconstruction of Aden's major refinery, and the training of the Yemeni oil industry work force. The document was signed by Mr. Sa'id al-'Attar, the Yemeni deputy prime minister and the minister of industry, oil, and mineral resources, and Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh- Kho'i.

In an interview with our correspondent, the Yemeni oil minister referred to the extend of the development of Iran's oil industry during recent years and the considerable abilities of Iranian oil industry experts. He said: Yemen is keen to benefit from Iranian experiences in this field.

Mr. Aqazadeh-Kho'i has provided some details to our correspondent.

[Begin Aqazadeh-Kho'i recording] After a few days of negotiations with the Yemeni delegation, we fortunately reached some good understandings. One of the points that was very important for the Yemeni side was that, after becoming familiar with the Islamic Republic of Iran's capabilities, they had reached the conclusion that we can provide useful assistance to our Muslim Yemeni brothers.

It was therefore decided that they would propose certain regions for oil exploration to an Iranian delegation that will visit Yemen. After the necessary studies by the Iranian team, oil and gas exploration work will begin in a suitable region and the necessary contracts will be signed.

The second point was the reconstruction of Aden's refinery, which is one the oldest refineries in the region. At present, it needs fundamental reconstruction. The necessary documents are to be submitted to Iran, and after research and study, we will offer our proposals for the reconstruction of that refinery. In view of the Iranian expertise in this field, we can certainly be a good competitor for other companies. Naturally, as far as price and the quality of work is concerned, we can offer better terms than the other competitors.

The other point is the training of the Yemeni oil and gas industry work force in Iran. We have agreed that we will train some Yemeni work force in Iran, so as to enable them to make effective contribution to their country's gas and oil industry. [end recording]

Iran: Official Election Campaign Begins for Fifth Majles

LD2902180696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Official electoral campaigning began today following the announcement of the list of candidates who have the credentials to stand for the fifth Majles. The election headquarters said that as stated by law the electoral campaigning has to end 24 hours before the election day, 8 March.

In its statement, the headquarters said that it is forbidden to use property owned by the government, government affiliated organizations, municipalities, and institutions financed by the general [state] budget for or against the Majles candidates.

Iran: Society Officially Recognized as Political Organization

LD2602080596 Tehran IRNA in English 0745 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The Society to Defend Values of the Islamic Revolution was officially recognized as a political organization, said an informed source here Sunday night.

He said that the commission in charge of the Article 10 of the law on political parties and associations, endorsed formation of the group in its latest meeting.

Hojatt ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri had recently said that the society will be formed and that he will announce its founding members immediately after it is officially recognized.

Iran: Asgar-Owladi: 'No Disagreement' Between Rafsanjani, JRM

LD2602105696 Tehran IRNA in English 1022 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Majles deputy from Tehran Habibollah Asgar-Owladi Mosalman said that there is no disagreement between President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Jameh-ye

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Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] of Tehran, reported the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' Monday. "President Rafsanjani always discusses his views with the JRM's central committee and holds the committee in highest esteem," he elaborated.

Asgar-Owladi who is the Islamic Coalition Association's (ICA) secretary general refused to comment on the composition of the next parliament saying, "it is hard to foresee what the next parliament would be like, since being included in a particular list is not a true indication of a candidate's true political beliefs."

The deputy from Tehran constituency stressed that when the next term of the Majles meets, it will be revealed which group has gained the majority because the deputies might cover up their true positions until then.

Member of the presiding board of the Majles said the JRM and ICA have formed a coalition and will issue a joint list of candidates. He welcomed participation of the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) in the elections saying that those who are active in social and political fields can test their populatiry through participation in the elections. "The presence of this group on the election scene will further testify to the strength and stability of the country's governing system," he said.

Iran: Annual Meeting of Assembly of Experts Approves Measures

LD2602131096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The annual meeting of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership Affairs held a session in Qom yesterday afternoon under the chairmanship of Deputy Speaker Ebrahim Amini.

At the meeting, Article 4 of the measure proposed by the commission for compiling and examining the election law, and internal regulations of the Article 108 commission were approved, with amendments, after discussion and debate. In addition, a single note was added to Article 12 of the measures approved by the Assembly of Experts about the duties of substitute members [alal- badal] of the research committee. One article and five notes of the measure proposed by the Article 108 commission about the examination of resignation of Assembly of Experts' members were approved, with some amendments.

Iran: Majles Deputy Deplores Executives' Election Involvement

NC2802215696 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Feb 96 pp 6, 3

[FBIS Translated Text] The members of the six-man group and Tehran Municipality should decide where to supply the campaign money for the Functionaries of the System and what the motives of the advertising firms behind this move are.

This was stated by Tehran Deputy 'Ali Movahhedi-Savoji in an interview with our correspondent. He added: A member of the Functionaries has alleged that the Municipality has rented out all the advertising centers in Tehran to one company. We ask: Do such companies have anything to do with the Municipality or not? Does the Municipality have the power to carry out its legal duties toward these companies or not? If the answer is that the Municipality cannot control or supervise these companies, this is a lie because it is not possible for an advertising company to put up a sign anywhere in Tehran without the Municipality's approval. How could a company do something like this without the Municipality's consent?

He added: Again the question is whether these companies are private or belong to the Municipality. If they are private, who established them and where does the money come from?

The head of the Majles Domestic Affairs Committee also said: Can we believe that advertising companies do not receive any credit from the Tehran Municipality or from the six-man group and are carrying out the campaigns in favor of a specific process only to please God? I think that any company that is involved in campaigning for the Functionaries has common interests with the Tehran Municipality and the six-man group.

The Tehran deputy clarified that there have been four elections for the Majles. Why have none of these companies felt a duty to help in campaigning until now? What has happened on the eve of the Fifth Majles elections that some private advertising companies have suddenly volunteered to freely spend tens of millions of tumans in favor of one political faction?

Movahhedi-Savoji recalled that if the six-man group wants to actively participate in the elections, it can do this in two ways. It can either just call on the people to participate in the elections and not submit a list of candidates, or its members can resign from their positions, in which case their activities will not be legally banned.

Commenting on the reason for the protests against the activities by the Functionaries, Movahhedi-Savoji said:

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A deputy who is elected to the Majles should not be dependent on the ruling powers. If a candidate is supported by a minister or an executive official, he will naturally be indebted to them after his election and he cannot carry out his duties as a deputy well.

In conclusion he said: The effort by a number of executive officials to gain access to the Majles is actually an insult to the people, because the people need independent deputies and a deputy should be indebted to the people and not to the executives. The current method in which the executive officials are interfering in the elections is an unpleasant precedent for the Islamic Republic.

Iran: Tehran on Significance of People's Role in Majles Election

NC2902095996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Campaigning for candidates for the fifth Majles election starts today. All the election phases are being completed so that the fifth Majles will demonstrate the public's desire for the legislature, the arrangement of the affairs of society, and the safeguarding of the interests and exigencies of the Islamic Republic system. And, since the Majles is the result of the people's votes, its performance represents the people's wishes and wants, hence the Majles shoulders the largest responsibility in safeguarding the nation's interests and in ensuring the people's outlook. This is because all the bills approved by the Majles show how the Iranian nation thinks and the hopes it pursues.

Naturally this internal and external picture the Majles will portray will depend on its coordination with the goals of the Islamic Revolution. This coordination between the nation's deputies and revolutionary and Islamic goals leads us to expect that laws and regulations based on Islam will be stabilized in society and that the process of legal activities and the regulation of social relations will be in conformity with the beliefs of the society.

This coordination grants special strength to the Islamic Republic system, enabling it to express the genuine positions of the revolution on international developments and to show the world the legislative powers of the divine system of Islam. A Majles that is in line with the nature of the Islamic Revolution consolidates social justice and economic progress in society and shows that all the interests of the various strata are considered.

What is said about the significance of Majles' coordination with the system and the strength of the Majles in strengthening the Islamic Republic system shows the responsibility of all the people in forming the fifth term of the Majles, because the Majles, with all its domestic and foreign effects, is formed by the votes of all society. Each member of society who is interested in strengthening the Majles and in safeguarding it from ills should play his role in electing worthy deputies, because the election of good deputies and efforts to carefully identify them constitute the major factor in electing the nation's worthy deputies and in forming a powerful Majles. This will ensure a Majles that is in line with the goals of the Islamic Revolution.

Being indifferent to the elections and ignoring the role that public votes play in electing the worthiest deputies are big ills that threaten the formation of an efficient, alert, and effective Majles. But the political alertness of every member of society and the priceless experiences they have gained throughout the Islamic Revolution will keep the Majles and the system free from ills. With their correct votes and their active participation in the election, the people will form the fifth Majles on the basis of Islamic and alert fundaments.

Iran: IRGC Commander Calls For 'Massive Turnout' in Elections

LD2902145996 Tehran IRNA in English 1442 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kashan, Feb. 29, IRNA — Commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Mohsen Reza'i said here on Thursday Majles undertaks basic duty of legislation and approval of the budget of the country.

In a meeting with a large group of the Basij (volunteer forces), IRGC personnel and families of martyrs of the Iraqi-imposed war (1980-1988), he said massive turnout of people in the forthcoming parliamentary polls is of great importance.

He said the world is keeping an aye on the turnout of the Iranian people in the elections.

He said a strong Majles would be formed thanks to the massive presence of people in polling booths.

Iran: Larijani: Climate for Upcoming Election 'Better Prepared'

LD2902224196 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Interview with 'Ali Larijani, managing director of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, by unidentified

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correspondent, in the "Political Roundtable" program — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] As our viewers are aware, we are close to the fifth Majles elections. How do you see people's awareness regarding participation in the elections?

[Larijani] I think since we have had a number of elections since the revolution, the process has taken a course which can be analyzed. Of course there were elections before the revolution. I remember the time when I was a student at the San'ati University. They would come and set up a desk in front of the university. But no one was interested. And anyway the election results were predetermined. No one was interested in such elections. They were totally artificial. However in the first election after the revolution — the referendum on the formation of the Islamic republic — there was an unprecedented turnout. Some 98 percent of the people participated. People have participated in noticeable numbers in the other elections be it for the presidency, the Majles, or the Assembly of Experts.

I think that within the context of the present elections the political scene is now a suitable arena for interaction between ideas. Of course it could have been even better. There are some problems in the media which limit the dialogue there. This is because the media have been banned from, for instance, advertising [for the candidates] or allowing the various factions to speak. But it would have been possible to create such an environment. You know that the media which have state support are banned [from advertising]. But according to studies carried out by the Voice and Vision's research center more people are going to participate in the coming elections in comparison with the previous elections. Of course this is a forecast based on their studies. It is based on research in Tehran and other places. I think there is a relatively suitable [political] climate particularly because various political groups have entered the elections. They might be announcing a list [of candidates] or engaging in political dialogue. The climate is better prepared.

At radio and television, we could have introduced discussions on the idea of political participation and we have established some discussions where we invited members of the press. The managers of the press have particular political tendencies. It is possible to say that they represent a sample of the existing political thought. I think there have been good discussions. It is possible to say that these are new things taking place at the radio and television. I have a positive view. The elections are taking a calm and positive form, God willing. [passage omitted]

Iran: Deputy Interior Minister Tabesh on Election Campaigning

96LA0148A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by M. Serjooie]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati has issued orders to stop the election campaign launched by the municipality, Deputy Interior Minister 'Ali Reza Tabesh said yesterday.

"The minister has ordered all election slogans removed from public walls," Tabesh said.

In an interview with IRAN NEWS, Tabesh said, "The interior minister issued orders that the public places owned by the Tehran Municipality should, in no way, be used for or against any group or faction taking part in the Majles elections."

In recent days election slogans containing propaganda materials for the G-16 appeared on the municipal-owned public places.

The slogans were, 'Islamic honor or prestige', 'Continuation of construction work', 'Devlop Iran', etc. These are the slogans used by the Group-16 in thier first statement on 18 January. The Tehran Mayor, Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi is one of the signatories to the declaration of the 16 senior executives who are now popularly known as the G-16.

The municipalities are under the supervision of the Interior Ministry.

Following a clear order of the interior minister, the Tehran Municipality will definitely remove the slogans which are written on public places and buses in Tehran.

The interior minister also asked the law enforcement forces and provincial authorities to supervise the implementation of his orders regarding the removal of election slogans.

The Freedom Movement has not been registered with the Interior Ministry and is not allowed to launch its election campaign as a party, Tabesh said.

Iran: Daily Deplores Negative Campaigning by Majles Candidates

NC2902203396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Feb 96 p 16

[Editorial: "Elections and Negative Propaganda"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

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The world of political candidates is a strange one. Some seek to elicit the people's votes by hosting dinners, others use promises, threats, and vandalism, while some seek to deny reality in order to promote themselves! In the entire circle of existence they can only see themselves. They consider the Majles the ultimate realization of their hopes and aspirations! Their whole attention span begins and ends with their own inconsequential and limited existence, their seat in the Majles, and the concomitant perks and high salaries... [ellipsis as published]

Of course, it is not as if the nominated Majles candidates are all like this. Fortunately there are some who are conversant with the correct etiquette for elections and observe propriety during their canvassing activities. They present their programs with poise and logic to the people as the final arbiters.

If only all the candidates were like them, we would have a flawless and irreproachable Majles; and by the will of God, we hope that gradually we attain this desired state of affairs in the near future.

Some of the first group—that is, those who are engaged in deviant and improper campaigning and who seek to show their brilliant minds, abilities, and extraordinary prowess by belittling the performance of officials or other people and who say that they would do this and that if they are elected to the Majles—are the most dangerous of all.

This is a mere propaganda ploy based on "self-promotion at the expense of others"; and in principle, only those who are suffering from complexes, negativism, and the petty and narrow minded would resort to such tactics.

It is said that in some election constituencies some candidates seek to ignore the government's services and spread negative propaganda against officials by deliberately playing up certain problems in order to focus the people's attention on themselves. The conduct of such individuals contravenes the guidance enshrined in the testament of His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may God be pleased with him, and the exhortations of the great leader of the revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i.

Fortunately, our people are vigilant; and in most cases they have dealt with and rejected those individuals who have sought personal popularity by means of destructive and negative publicity. This is the correct thing to do. The people should be alert and identify and isolate individuals who are inclined to resort to such damaging tactics which would gladden the hearts of the enemies. And they should refrain from voting for them, so that the Majles is not contaminated with negativist, petty, and complex-ridden individuals.

Iran: Ebrahim Yazdi Criticizes Screening of Majles Nominees

LD2902180196 Tehran IRNA in English 0905 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 29, IRNA — Secretary General of the Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI) Ebrahim Yazdi said that his group will publish its platform and political objectives soon. In an interview with the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' Thursday, Yazdi, who was Bazargan's foreign minister, criticized the way that nominees for the Majles elections were screened.

Yazdi and 14 others, including FMI and National Front members and a number of independents, filed their nomination papers but 11 of them were rejected at various stages of the screening process.

Abolfazl Bazargan, Ezzatollah Sahabi, Hassan Farid Alam, and Mohammad Bastenegar were the only nominees from the group of 15 who were approved by the election authorities, the paper added.

Iran: Tehran Mayor Says Various Ideas Should Be Represented in Majles

LD2902180796 Tehran IRNA in English 0959 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 29, IRNA — Tehran Mayor Gholam Husayn Karbaschi in an interview with the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' on Thursday said that all political views and outlooks should be represented in the next Majles.

On list of the candidates of Kargozaran-e Sazandegi, Karbaschi said it consists of individuals with different ideas on political, economic, social and cultural affairs.

Tehran mayor added that the 270-seat Majles, with representatives from all walks of life, will be in better touch with the country's political and social problems.

He further added that broad-based representation will be highly effective in helping the Majles to find working solutions to countries problems.

Iran: Reactivation of Political Parties Hailed

NC2902210796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 21 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Revitalization of Party System a Great Landmark in Our History"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Although several groups have been formed on the eve of the Majles elections, none

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of them is inclined to form a political party in its real term.

So far we have witnessed the formation of Kargozaran-e Sazandegi, Society for Defense of the Values of the Islamic Revolution, plus other groups which have been present in Iranian political scene, of course, not in the form of political parties. The recently formed groupings, are not apparently willing to form political parties. If this is so they will probably vanish from our politics after the Fifth Majles elections.

Abolqasem Sarhaddizadeh announced early this week that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani may reorganize the Islamic Republic Party. Hashemi-Rafsanjani should be given a pat on the back if he takes the plunge to do so.

In several stages of our revolution, Hashemi-Rafsanjani has proved to be a pioneer. Probably with the two terms of his presidency coming to an end in the near future, he will do a unique service to our nation if he revitalizes the party system and brings the culture of party system back to our nation. Undoubtedly it is not the name of the party that matters, what we need at this juncture of our history is a meaningful, workable party system to replace the present hotchpotch.

Even now that the competition for the 5th Majles to the formation of new groupings has entered a crucial stage, none of the groups seem to be willing to enter the fray on the basis of a defined party platform.

One reason is that the members of the groups do not have a firm belief in the party system. Probably they are not well aware of the advantages a party system can have for the nation. The minimum service that a party system may render to the nation is that the ruling group feels that it is accountable to nation on the basis of its platform which should work as a covenant between the party and the voters.

In the absence of political parties, what we see are accusations levelled by one contender against the other and vise versa. But if the parties come to power on the basis of their party platforms and promises that they make to nation before the elections, they are more likely to keep their words. In this case it would be easier to assess and scrutinize their behavior after the elections. This will automatically lead to accountability of parties and party members to the nation.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani may create another landmark in our contemporary history by revitalizing party system in Iran's political culture. He should be given a helping hand in this Herculean task by those who care to see a prosperous Iran in near future.

Iran: Daily Encourages New Groups To Contest Elections

NC2902213596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Elections—the Allurements and the Aversions"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

In the course of journalistic assignments, there sometimes come opportunities which if ignored result in losses for society, but if taken advantage of in a correct and timely manner they render great service to public, national, and religious interests.

In order to identify these opportunities correctly and capitalize on them in time requires political alertness and revolutionary audacity. While treading this terrain, one must not be daunted by incriminations and be able to tolerate the friendly gripes of those who cannot fearlessly walk alongside them. [passage omitted]

Even though the entry of some new groups in the Fifth Majles elections has drawn intense opposition from some former groups and uncivil treatment by the press—where they are described as an affront to the Majles in contravention of conventional manners as well as the law—gradually it has turned out that this development does not denigrate the Majles nor flout conventions or the law.

Fortunately even more new groups have joined in the elections and in general promoted more serious and extensive mass participation in the Fifth Majles elections. It is a major duty of orators and those who wield the pen to support the introduction of new entities to the election scene at this juncture. Those who have recognized this opportunity and entered the fray in a timely manner have risen to the occasion in discharging their obligations and thus rendered a major service to the Islamic Revolution and the system. Those who hesitate due to apprehensions and who emphasize the dangers should heed the following points:

1. What has occurred in the country so far is the product of the joint planning and thinking of the new and the old schools. If these actions have proved positive, it is because of their collective effort. If they have been negative, it is for the same reasons. Accordingly, there has been no great difference in their respective performances.

2. Unacceptable ideas such as cultural flexibility and the suggestions of compromise with the United States and relaxation toward the West are not entirely due to any one of these groups. In each of the cliques there

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are unfortunately those who harbor such wrong and aberrant concepts. Just as we cannot blame an entire group for such deviations just because it contains some such individuals, so we should not consider any of the groups entirely blameless either.

3. Within the framework of forces dedicated to the system, our constant effort must be to enlist more individuals and to prevent them from falling, as far as possible. [passage omitted]

It is not very admirable for us to discard a number of forces loyal to the system by attaching pejorative labels to them, such as being opposed to the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult], or by resorting to tactics such as rumormongering and rudeness. This only gives the enemies of the revolution an opportunity to say that fewer people believe in the Islamic Republic every day!

What would be really admirable is for us to follow the exhortations that the great leader of the revolution uttered on the eve of the election to the Fourth Majles as well as the Fifth Majles, warning of vilifying people as opposing the Velayat-e Faqih or eliminating them due to their personal tastes or preferences. All our efforts should be focused on getting more groups to participate in the election campaign. Thus, while livening up the elections, the Majles can also benefit from diverse tastes and preferences.

What can be gleaned from an in-depth and intensive assessment of these facts is that at this juncture in encouraging the various forces to participate actively in the elections, the absorption of these forces should be taken as a principle. In the next stage— that is, when casting our votes—it is the duty of all concerned to separate the wheat from chaff from among the various groupings, to discard those who are unsuitable, and to support the healthy groups and factions faithful to the system. [passage omitted]

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES Calls For Peaceful Elections

NC2902214596 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 27 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Holding Fair Elections Requires Sound Circumstances"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] One person has been killed and several injured prior to the legal outset of election campaigns for the fifth Majles general elections to be held on March 8.

As the morning daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI reported on Monday [26 February], fighting between the backers of two candidates in Khomam region of Gilan Province has left one person dead and several injured. In another incident, one person was shot and wounded in disputes between the supporters of two candidates in Zabol, Sistan va Baluchestan Province.

The incidents have occurred at a time when the list of qualified candidates has not been officially presented by the executive authorities, and the legal election activities are to be launched on Thursday.

First of all, illegal and premature election campaigns have always been one of the main causes of tragedies of this sort. Second, some of the candidates, using their black money, have always tried at the time of elections to buy people's votes.

With the commencement of election campaigns, the authorities should spare no candidates who try to influence the electors thorough ballyhoo, extravaganza or foul means.

Voters require a healthy atmosphere in order to be able to evaluate and judge candidates and elect the most competent and efficient ones. The Iranian nation has already proved its commitment to the sublime values of the Islamic Revolution. Our compatriots have frequently demonstrated that they are prepared to defend the revolution even by laying down their lives. Hence, they expect the officials to safeguard their rights.

The right to vote is a fundamental right of every qualified citizen. People are getting prepared to elect their representatives to the Fifth Majles, but they should be provided with sound circumstances so that they will fulfill their task in the best possible manner.

The ball is now in the executive and supervising officials' court. They should not allow some hooligans to turn the election theater into a movie scene. Elections should be fair and free of any pressure exerted by any circle whatsoever.

Iran: Badamchian Says G-16 Plans to Capture Presidency

96LA0148B Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 7 Feb 96 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—A member of the Islamic Coalition Association (ICA) was quoted yesterday as saying that "a certain group, through an integrated plan, is planning to capture the presidency after the expiry of the term of Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani."

ICA member, Assadollah Badamchian said: "I believe that if they had won (achieved their objectives), the country would have lost the Velayat system and gone into the hands of religious liberals."

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He said that the Majles would lose its independence if serving ministers select the candidates for the coming Majles elections.

The political group G-16 included several ministers who had proposed to run their own candidates for the coming elections, but withdrew following the intervention of the Leader Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

"If someone enters the Majles with the support of a minister, he would not be able to assess, supervise and investigate the activities of that minister, and finally he could not impeach him," said Badamchian, a candidate himself.

He was included for the first time in the list of Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) for the elections. Badamchian is also deputy of political and social affairs in the Judiciary.

The opposition to G-16 is a source of honor for the ICA, he said. During the elections "we are facing a situation in which only one (group) has money and facilities at its disposal."

He said that when he approached the municipality to rent a signboard for the election campaign, "we were told that all the boards had already been acquired by others."

"Ironically, we have no right to use places other than those owned by the municipality for our election campaign," Badamchian said.

"Isn't this a political game?" Badamchian queried in an interview with IRNA.

Earlier, Deputy Interior Minister 'Ali Reza Tabesh in an interview with IRAN NEWS said that orders were issued by his ministry to the Tehran Municipality to remove campaign slogans from public places. These slogans were in support of the G-16.

A rightist, Islamic Engineers Association Secretary-General Hasan Ghaffuri-Fard, said that his group supported the 30-person list of the JRM for Majles elections.

"To preserve the unity and solidarity of the line of Velayat, we are not going to issue a separate list" he said.

Majles deputy Mohammad Reza Bahonar yesterday said that Majma-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez [MRM] had long ago announced that it would not issue a list of candidates for the elections.

Bahonar said the MRM had two objectives by such an announcement: to cast doubt on the Fourth Term of the Majles and the government, and to assess the organization's popularity among the masses.

"We were expecting that technocrats (G-16) would appear on the political scene on the eve of the Fifth Majles elections," he said.

"Technocrats want domination of science rather than religion in the society," Bahonar said, adding that the G-16 wants to accelerate the economic policy of the country. Social justice enjoys second place for the technocrats, Bahonar said.

Despite the Interior Ministry's announcement that no group has the right to use sign boards and public buses for displaying election campaign posters, the Tehran Municipality is increasing the use of these spaces for election propaganda.

The Women's Islamic Society Secretary Ms. Zahra Mostafavi yesterday said her society will issue a list of 30 candidates for the elections, including both males and females.

Guardians Council Spokesman Ayatollah Emami-Kashani told IRNA that the criteria for determining the eligibility of candidates for the election is belief in Islam, the Islamic system, and the Velayat-e Faqih.

He said that cases may be referred to the Guardians Council's Supervisory Office if the name of any candidate is rejected. If the rejected candidate is not satisfied with the explanation of the Supervisory Office, the case may be referred to Tehran's head office of the council.

The Interior Ministry on Monday extended the time of filing nomination papers from 2 pm to 8 pm. A total of 5,121 candidates have filed their nomination papers, including 914 for Tehran Constituency.

Meanwhile, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mostafa Mirsalim imposed a ban on election publicity in the government-owned print media.

According to a report broadcast by the Iranian television yesterday, Mirsalim said, "Therefore, the Persian dailies, IRAN, HAMSHAHRI, KAYHAN, and ETTELA'AT are not allowed to publish material concerning election propaganda for the candidates."

Publicity for the elections in the media are not restricted, the minister said, adding that propaganda for a particular candidate, faction or group is banned by the government-owned media.

Mirsalim said that municipalities are also not allowed to use public places for election propaganda for or against the candidates.

The minister, however said, registered private publicity firms are allowed to use their facilities for election propaganda.

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The text for the election publicity and propaganda should first be presented to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for the approval, he said.

The municipality has been asked to stop elections propaganda through its facilities, Mirsalim said and expressed regret that 'still election propaganda could be seen in the municipal facilities which is against the Elections Law.'

Iran: Former MKO Member Writes to Kohl Over Rajavi Death Threat

LD2602153496 Tehran IRNA in English 1439 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — A breakaway member of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in a letter to the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said that MKO ringleader Mas'ud Rajavi has issued his death sentence.

Jamshid Tafrishi, ex-member of MKO, in his letter has announced that Rajavi and his accomplices have been worried about his repeated contacts with international bodies to divulge the MKO's continued collaboration with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn in providing chemical substances and weapons of mass destruction.

Tafrishi said that MKO had handed him over to Iraqi officials as an opponent of the Iraqi regime to be prisoned and tortured, adding that they would spare no effort in hatching plots against ex-members of the grouplet. Tafrishi further stressed in his letter to Kohl that MKO agents were tracking him down since the assassination order had been issued by Rajavi.

Iran: Trial Continues of Zendeh-Del Gang

LD2702151296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1315 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The sixth session of the trial of the Zendeh-Del gang [accused of spying and trying to smuggle people out of Iran after the revolution] was held yesterday at Tehran's Islamic revolution tribunal, with Hojjat ol-Eslam Rahbarpur presiding.

According to the Central News Unit, Sadaqian, the accused number five in the case, spoke in defense of himself and, referring to five years of service in the SAVAK [Shah's secret police], he said that he had been engaged in obtaining money and bank loans for the Zendeh-Del gang. He also confessed to all [charges of] the economic fraud he had carried out to inflict blows on the country's financial system.

Fereydun Abuziya, the accused number six in the case, for his part, said the following about the cooperation between Hedayatollah Zendeh-Del, the head of the gang, and the Jerusalem-occupying regime and the CIA: Many telephone calls and telexes were exchanged between Zendeh-Del and his nephew, David Malamat, an agent of the Zionist regime, with the aim of disrupting and causing trouble in the activities of the sacred Islamic system. He said: In one of these telexes, a code name was uncovered which revealed extensive plans and operations for sabotage in Iran. [as heard]

Iran: Official Says Country's Security Situation 'Very Good'

LD2802223496 Tehran IRNA in English 2056 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Esfahan, Feb. 28, IRNA — Deputy Interior Minister for Security and Disciplinary Affairs, Gholam Hoseyn Bolandian, said here today that the country's general security situation was "very good and dersirable".

The Interior Ministry official made the statement in his address to a gathering of the political and security deputies of the country' s governors-general held in the historic city of Esfahan.

On the forthcoming parliamentary polls scheduled for March 8, he said it has been decided that the disciplinary forces would undertake the protection of ballot boxes in all constituencies.

He stressed that the most important responsibility of different security organizations, especially the governor general's political and security deputies is to provide a safe and secure atmosphere for the elections.

The one-day gathering was held to study and examine the security and disciplinary measures taken by the governors generals throughout the country.

Iran: Khamene'i Says Imam's Fatwas in Line With 'Existing Realities'

LD2602161596 Tehran IRNA in English 1336 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, on Monday received members of the headquarters in charge of organizing a congress to define the jurispridential doctrines of the late Imam Khomeyni. Addressing the audience, the supreme leader said that holding the congress was a great, important and necessary task whose achievements would be of great significance to the future of jurisprudence, theological schools and the world of Islam as a whole.

Ayatollah Khamene'i also underlined the outstanding role the late Imam Khomeyni had played in bringing about a great intellectual upheaval in the world of Islam.

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"The late Imam Khomeyni entered the scene of politics at the age of 80 and from intellectual point of view brought about a great development in the world of Islam... this was one of his outstanding characteristics," the leader said.

Underlining the fact that the late imam's fatwas (religious rulings) correspond with the existing realities, Ayatollah Khamene'i said that while being fully committed to jurisprudential principles and procedures, the late imam proved to be highly innovative in jurisprudential questions. This is a precious asset that should be used, he added.

Towards the end of his speech, the leader of the Islamic revolution expressed hope that theological schools in Iran could make optimum use of the outcome of the congress.

Prior to the leader's speech, Secretary of the Congress Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmud Hashemi briefed the supreme leader on the stepts taken so far to hold the congress to define the jurisprudential doctrines of the late Imam Khomeyni.

Iran: Ayatollah Denies Opposition to Khamene'i as Velayat-e Faqih

LD2802145096 Tehran IRNA in English 1347 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Feb. 28, IRNA — Ayatollah Ahmad Azari Qomi, a member of the Assembly of Experts, on Wednesday [28 February] strongly denied Western media claims that he was opposed to Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i holding the title of Velayat-e Faqih (rule of supreme religious jurisprudent).

Speaking at the meeting of the members of the Assembly of Experts, he said he is ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He said that Western mass media have embarked on futile attempts to misportray the realities in the Islamic Republic and distort the views of the followers of the leadership of the Islamic revolution. He said that he is a follower of the leader of the Islamic revolution and is loyal to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic.

Iran: Rafsanjani Begins Tour of Development Projects

LD2902095896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived in Zahedan this morning in order to open and inspect several development projects in the Sistan va Baluchestan province. Our colleague reports from Khash:

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani was welcomed by the local officials of the province in the cities of Zahedan and Khash. A few minutes ago he unveiled a commemoration plaque to open a huge cement factory in Khash. Work to build this cement factory, with daily production capacity of 2,500 tonnes, began in the year 1370 [1991-92]. The factory has just started production with annual theoretical capacity of 750,000 tonnes cement and 600,000 tonnes of [word indistinct].

The cost of building the factory was 81 billion rials and more than $57 million in foreign currency. The cement produced in the factory will meet the country's requirements and, in addition to its export potential, will create employment and prosperity in the Sistan va Baluchestan province.

Right now the president is inspecting various units of the cement factory. Later today he will inaugurate or inspect several other projects in the province.

Pakistan

Pakistan: India Accused of Pursuing 'Confrontation,' Proliferation

BK2902161796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has said that India, with its intransigence over Kashmir, is keeping tension in South Asia at a high level and is thwarting the prospects of reducing military expenditures. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, the spokesman said that India is not likely to acknowledge that it has embarked upon a path of confrontation by deploying 600,000 troops in occupied Kashmir, launching a massive buildup of offensive weapons, and threatening war against Pakistan.

The spokesman rejected the Indian president's claim of a perceptible improvement in the situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and said that the occupation forces have intensified repression against people in the territory and have sought to escalate tension along the Line of Control. In addition, custodial deaths continue, and Kashmiri leaders are being attacked.

The spokesman described the allegations made against Pakistan during the Indian president's address to the parliament on 26 February as false and reminded that the Pakistan Government has repeatedly offered objective and fruitful talks. He said the Indian president's references to the acquisition of arms and uranium enrichment technology by Pakistan were attempts to divert

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attention from India's own preparations to carry out another nuclear test at Pokaran. India has just tested a medium-range Prithvi missile and has embarked upon an arms acquisition program. It has also announced a 10 percent increase in its military spending, which already far exceeds its legitimate defense requirements.

In response to a question, he said Pakistan has repeatedly stated that it has not imported any nuclear weapons related material from China. The spokesman said the equipment was imported from China under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency and is for peaceful use at the Chashma power reactor. The issue of nuclear material has been raised at a time when India is preparing to carry out one more nuclear test and opposes a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In fact, the world should center its attention on India, which in a real sense is indulging in nuclear proliferation.

Answering a question, the spokesman said that the French Government has politically approved the sale of Mirage aircraft. The number of aircraft and other details are being worked out, and it will take some time.

Pakistan: Spokesman on Indian Defense Budget, PRC Nuclear Imports

BK2902143896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan says the 10 percent increase in India's defense spending poses a serious threat to Pakistan's security. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad, a Foreign Office spokesman said already there is enormous disparity between Indian defense expenditure and Pakistan's defense budget. He said 10 percent increase in its defense budget far exceeds its legitimate defense requirements.

The spokesman said Pakistan categorically denies it has imported any nuclear weapon related technology from China and hoped the U.S. determination in this regard will go in its favor. Only nuclear related—not nuclear weapon related—item that had been imported from China is for peaceful purposes and safeguarded Chashma reactor.

The spokesman said the reference to arms acquisition and enrichment technology in Indian president's address to the parliament are obviously attempts to divert attention from India's preparations for carrying out a nuclear test at Pokaran, which were reported by objective observers. He said India has also just tested a medium-range Prithvi missile. Moreover, he said, the Indians have embarked upon an arms acquisition program, equipping armed forces which were already many times the size of Pakistan.

Pakistan: Editorial Opposes Indian Membership in UN Security Council

BK2902151696 Islamabad NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 29 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Security Council Membership for India"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmed Kamal, Pakistan's representative to the United Nations, has said countries that violate the principle of peaceful coexistence and harbor aggressive designs against their neighbors should not be made permanent members of the Security Council. He said this in reference to India. Efforts are currently underway to make India a permanent member of the Security Council. If this happens, God forbid, then India will set a new standard of aggression not only in the subcontinent but all over South Asia. It has committed military aggression against Pakistan and other neighboring countries. So far it has usurped Sikkim, Juangadh, and Hyderabad. Its politics are dominated by fanatical Hindus who, out of utter hatred, use every tactic to harm Muslims. Its 600,000 or more troops in occupied Kashmir behave worse than beasts.

We have said that the system by which countries are made members of the Security Council should be reviewed, but it is no improvement to give a regional rascal a place in one of the important organs of the United Nations. If the United States manages to get India — its favorite — seated in the Security Council, then Israel — its other rogue in the Middle East — will also demand this "right." Thus another sword will be hanging over the heads of Muslims in the region. This is not the way to change the procedures for membership in the Security Council. It will give veto power to an aggressor. India is the country that is preventing this region from becoming a zone of peace. It uses all kinds of unfair tactics and calls UN resolutions obsolete, even at the United Nations itself. One can imagine what it would do if it had more power.

Moreover, it is very unfair that the 1 billion Muslims of the world have absolutely no representation in the Security Council while the countries that have been playing havoc on Muslims are being given permanent membership. If the United Nations thinks that the UN secretary general represents the Muslim region then it is just a farce, because the secretary general is a Christian and his wife is Jewish. How can he represent the Muslims of the Middle East? Not long ago he expressed his helplessness regarding the settlement of the Kashmir problem. The so-called representation given to the Middle East is actually meaningless.

The Muslim members of the United Nations form a big bloc, but none of these countries is a permanent

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member of the Security Council. The Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] should have struggled for the Muslim countries to be represented on the Security Council, but the OIC has remained silent instead of fighting for this right for Muslims. It occasionally passes a protest resolution over some issue, but lately even this is not happening. If the Islamic Conference is observing silence, then it is the duty of the major countries like the United States to stop this mockery against the 1 billion Muslims of the world and not to support a country notorious for aggression. They might have to pay a high price for this unjustified enmity against Muslims. A country guilty of destroying peace should not be given an important position in an organization working for peace.

Pakistan: U.S. Report on 'State Failure' Viewed

BK0103102496 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 1 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "For Whom the Bell Tolls?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CIA was asked by the office of the Vice-President of the US to conduct an inquiry as to why states fall apart. The CIA organised a State Failure Task Force comprising eminent experts in the field to come up with the possible answers to guide US decision makers in crisis management. The task force reviewed more than a hundred cases of state failure during the last 40 years and isolated variables that determine the fate of a state. It turned out, among other things, that, poor democracies are more unstable than either rich democracies or poor non-democracies. Poor democracies that fail to improve living standards are exceptionally vulnerable. High infant mortality rate, which is in fact an indicator of poor living standards, is also a harbinger of state failure.

Using such postulates, CIA analysed data from different countries and has come up with a list of more than 12 high-risk countries which might fall apart in the near future with India topping the list. The high infant mortality rate of India has gone up instead of going down. It's GNP has dropped from the previous year's and its rupee has plunged to forty rupees a dollar. In fact, India has failed in all the other 29 variables the task force has discovered, thanks to the five percent ruling Brahmins mindlessly wasting national wealth in forging weapons of mass destruction with callous disregard to the miseries of its teeming millions. It is not clear what is the purpose of releasing this report at a time when India is in the thick of a corruption scandal. But like the western media, the CIA is renowned for resorting to suggestive reporting at times of crises to guide the disruptive forces.

The upshot of the task force analysis is that a sound economy is the life support system of democracy. Economic sustenance determines the fate of a democratic state. It is not much of a comfort that Pakistan is not included in the high-risk democracies. It could be an error of judgement, deliberate or otherwise, on the part of CIA, but it is imperative that we neither ignore the CIA's report nor rely on it to the exclusion of everything else. We need to conduct a study about the pattern of governance, the state of our economy, the grade of our democracy and the trends therein.

We have learnt, the hard way, that democracy is the only system of governance that guarantees our survival. It was always under dictatorships that our integrity and very existence was threatened. In fact, Bangladesh was born the day Ayub Khan imposed martial law. Any chance that we still had to salvage the country from the devastation of that martial law evaporated during the equally ab horrrent regime of Yahya Khan. Unfortunately we learnt nothing from the dismemberment of the country and the last military ruler Zia, blinded his lust for power, plunged the country into the worst dictatorship of our history. During that period, institutions that were gasping for breath were choked totally to make room for the whims and fancies and the needs of a director. Sectarianism, ethnic militancy and a horde of disruptive, centrifugal forces along with their attended evils were the natural outcome.

The message is loud and clear. Democracy is the one and only solution. Nobody, who is well-intentioned doubts it. The big question is, what are we doing to protect our young democracy from the disruptive forces? Unfortunately, we don't seem to be doing even the barest minimum. The most crucial factor that the task force of CIA has unearthed is the economic health of a country. No economy can survive in isolation these days. Trade and investment are thus crucial. But our trade is squeaking under faulty policies and conflicting objectives. Tariffs are prohibitive.

Bank loans are almost impossible to get. Rate of interest, which is inversely proportional to investment, has gone through the roof. Price of communication is going up continuously. Cost of utilities like gas, electricity, etc are exorbitant. Incentives that we offer to entrepreneurs run counter to the restrictions of IMF and other donor agencies. On top of all that we seemed to have known little about such restriction at the time of formulating policies on permissions and incentives to the entrepreneurs. The result is that incentives and permissions are now being withdrawn at the behest of donor agencies when the investors are already half way through the deals and some have actually started the projects. Our taxation policy is extremely simplistic.

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It is designed only to raise revenue rather than act as a powerful redistributive instrument to bring about some modicum of justice in the distribution of wealth and resources. Naturally, the result is a progressively diminishing purchasing power and a consequent drop in the demand of consumer goods. In a vast number of areas, increased taxation results in reduced returns. Lack of data coupled with an inability to analyse scientifically the available one, leads to erroneous results and faulty policies.

It is time we abandon the habit of learning the hard way. We have suffered too much and for too long through our myopic and amateurish handling of sensitive national issues. Political expediencies have been given a free reign just too long and allowed to undermine professionalism and merit to the detriment of our decision making. The rampant bureaucratic lethargy is another great encumbrance. Files marked 'urgent', 'important' or some such prefixes keep lying around gathering dust as opportunities lapse. Accountability is nonexistent. In a bleak scenario like this, the survival instinct is the sole glimmer of hope. We have plenty of examples around that offer the same advantage as hindsight. India is one. Despite its numerous failures, its economy is more stable than ours and relatively less prone to the financial arm-twisting by the international donor agencies. Unlike the amateurish zeal of our economic wizards, Indian analysts have shown a better understanding of market forces. It is reflected in the success of their policies for promoting investment and trade. It has made significant progress in the latest money making fads like computer hardware and software technologies. India is not only manufacturing but also exporting computers. Its software exports are doing a billion dollar business yearly. In the face of such outstanding achievements, India faces the threat of disintegration because its economy has failed to raise the standard of living of its masses and subdue the disruptive forces.

If the prevailing chaos, political and economic, has not completely impaired our hearing, we also should be listening to the warning bells. What we do about it and how soon, will determine where do we stand in the high risk list of poor democracies. It would be a fatal error to believe that the bell tolls for India alone and the lines drawn on the map of South Asia will insulate us against the breakage that may occur across the border.

Pakistan: Minister on Nuclear Program, Kashmir

BK2902141996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Islamabad — Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali here Wednesday denied that any secret agreement was reached at any time in the past on the country's nuclear programme.

He said the government has a long standing policy of not entering into secret agreements of any kind with any foreign country on any issue including the nuclear programme.

"What former American ambassador to Pakistan Robert Oakley has said are his personal views," the Foreign Minister remarked in an interview. It is the first official reaction from any government official on the ex-envoy's assertions.

Oakley had said in an interview with The News in Washington recently that Pakistan's nuclear programme was capped in 1989 as a result of an agreement arrived at between top leaders of Pakistan and the United States early that year through "direct and formal communications."

The Pressler Amendment, he had claimed, was invoked in 1990 following Pakistan's unilateral decision to undo the capping of its nuclear programme.

The Foreign Minister said Pakistan in the course of developing its nuclear energy programme for peaceful purposes has acquired a certain capability. "But we have no intention of diverting it towards any non-peaceful objective, since we believe in the achievement of the goals of non-proliferation."

He said Pakistan has made a number of significant proposals to ensure that the South Asian region remains free of nuclear weapons.

However, former Army Chief General (Retd) Mirza Aslam Beg, who was a party to that far-reaching development of 1989, partially confirmed Oakley's assertion the other day saying that only the level of uranium enrichment had been "downgraded" from 95 per cent to 5 per cent. But he denied that the programme was capped.

Asked about Dr Mahbubul Haq's proposal to put Kashmir under UN trusteeship for a certain period, the Foreign Minister said this was his personal view, and the Pakistan government had nothing to do with it. "We want a negotiated, peaceful and just settlement of the Kashmir dispute according to the relevant UN resolutions and the spirit of the Simla Agreement."

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Pakistan's policy on Kashmir, he said, is based on principles and the UN resolutions pledging the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

To a question about prospects of a third option on Kashmir, Sardar Asif said, "Our stand is very clear the people of Kashmir should be allowed to decide their future according to the UN resolutions. In order to achieve this objective, India itself had agreed to hold plebiscite in the disputed state. It should redeem its pledge by allowing Kashmiris to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination."

About the prospects of Pak-India dialogue, Sardar Asif said Pakistan is not averse to talks with India but it should be meaningful and result-oriented, and it should tackle the core issue of Kashmir.

"In view of India's obvious reluctance to address the core issue, the prospects of a dialogue are not encouraging. Pakistan has made repeated offers of structured and meaningful talks to tackle the core issue. But India has shown no interest in coming to the negotiating table to address the real issue, and has instead made vague public offers of unstructured and generalised talks."

The Foreign Minister said Pakistan is victim of a situation created by Indian machinations in the disputed territory and of India's non-compliance with the UN resolutions as well as its volte face on its pledges to the UN and the people of Kashmir. "This is the crux of the problem. This is the principal barrier to finding a just solution to the problem."

Asked about the details of the plebiscite resolution on Kashmir, he said these documents clearly lay down that a plebiscite is to be held in the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir. "These resolutions are still relevant, and Pakistan abides by its commitments to the UN and the Kashmiris."

To a question about the Indian proposal to fence the Line of Control (LoC), the Foreign Minister said the international law does not prohibit states, in the exercise of their territorial integrity, to fence borders within their own territory.

"India has fenced a large portion of the international border with Pakistan on the basis of its own considerations, to which Pakistan has not objected since it has done so in its own territory," he said. "As regards LoC, it divides the territory of Kashmir into two parts which are disputed and the dispute has to be resolved in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people."

India, Asif said, continues to maintain illegal occupation of Kashmir. "As the LoC involves a disputed territory, India has no right to fence it under international law, particularly when the UN resolutions interdict material changes in the situation. The boundary between Jammu and Pakistan again cannot be fenced by India, as Jammu is a disputed territory."

He said as Foreign Minister he has been carefully watching Indian positions on various sensitive issues, and a pattern is now beginning to emerge. "Incrementally they are upping the ante on all regional and international issues."

In Kashmir, he said, they are pushing the elections, have let loose pro-Indian groups against Mujahideen, are not resolving Al- Faran issue, are now intimidating Kashmiri leaders through various ways and occupation forces have been given licence to kill.

India, he said, has backtracked on the agenda of dialogue, and did not want the Kashmir dispute to be mentioned in Indo-Pak talks which it is bound to take up, according to the much-touted Simla Accord. "In fact New Delhi has killed the Simla Accord. On the LoC, violations have seen rapid increase."

On the nuclear issue, the Foreign Minister said, India continues to pose the threat of a thermonuclear fusion test. "They have tested Prithvi and have subverted the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by linking it to time-bound framework for disarmament. This is like saying India doesn't want CTBT by putting unreasonable and unrealistic demands."

"They are trying to sell themselves to the world as custodians of South Asia and the Indian Ocean, and want the world to treat India as an overlord of the region. So their policy is based on intimidation and domination of South Asia. They have created a war hysteria in India against Pakistan," Sardar Asif said.

All these actions, he said, are meant to project themselves as future counterbalance to the might of China. "Along with these, they want to make international diplomatic gains by either being accepted as a full-fledged nuclear power and/or to get a permanent seat in UN Security Council. All this has something to do with their domestic policies."

Their message to the world, according to the Foreign Minister, is that India is big and beautiful like their Miss World, which deserved to be wooed by other countries. "But in reality behind- the-face of Miss World, there is an India that is groaning under poverty, sickness and squalor. Its poor people, who are 80 per cent of the population, have to bear the burden of the ambitions and

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grand designs of a small minority of prejudiced Hindu elite."

To a question about the Indian President's threat to Pakistan during his speech to the Indian parliament, he said these are unjustified and based on distorted logic. "The Indians are (?trying? to crush the Kahmir uprising and have perpetrated brutalities of the people of Tamil Nadu, Assam and other places. India is receiving massive quantities of sensitive low-priced military hardware from former USSR and now Russia, and continues to threaten Pakistan all the time. Pakistan is merely trying to protect its frontiers against feverish arms race and threats to its security." [passage omitted]

Pakistan: President Denies Proposing Political Package on Karachi

BK0103013996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of the President's House has categorically denied reports published in a section of the press today that the president had proposed a new political package to the Altaf Group during his meeting with its delegation yesterday. The spokesman said all such newspaper reports are based on baseless speculation.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Ministry Reports Confrontations With 'Terrorists'

BK0103052496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops in ambush confronted a group of three female terrorists yesterday morning at Kondavil in Jaffna. Two terrorists were killed, and one managed to escape with injuries. Troops recovered two terrorists' dead bodies, three hand grenades, one cyanide capsule, and a dog tag. Arrangements have been made to hand over the two dead bodies to ICRC [International Committee of Red Cross] through the civil police. The security forces suffered no casualties.

In another incident yesterday around 0600 at Kurulweddiyava, about 14 km northeast of Welikanda in the Batticaloa District, a group of terrorists fired at three civilians who had gone into the jungle for hunting. Troops rushed to the location from Kurulweddiyava detachment and fired at the terrorists, forcing them to flee the area. One civilian was killed and one civilian wounded due to the terrorist fire. Terrorists had also taken a shotgun belonging to one of the civilians. The wounded civilian was admitted to the Welikanda Hospital.

Operational headquarters of the Ministry of Defense, in a news release, said that around 0600 on Tuesday [27 February] at Kudremalai Point in Puttalam, terrorists forcibly took over four fishermen in Kal Aru while they were fishing in Kudremalai Point area. Later, the fishermen were released, but the terrorists had taken away the fiberglass dinghy and the 25-horsepower output motor belonging to the fishermen.

Troops confronted a group of terrorists, killing two of them on Tuesday early morning at Milambawali, about 8 km northwest of Batticaloa. The two dead terrorists were identified as: Yogadassa, the intelligence (?chief) of Batticaloa south; and Asitakaran, the intelligence cadre of Batticaloa south. Troops recovered one radio set from the scene of the incident. A soldier who was wounded has been admitted to the Batticaloa General Hospital.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Clashes; Anti-Norway Rally in Colombo

BK0103113996 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and seven others injured in the assault carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] at three different places in Batticaloa District. Troops engaged in a route-clearing operation between the military camps at Pulipaindakal [placename as transliterated] and Kirankulam became the target of the LTTE's surprise attack. One soldier was killed and another injured in this attack. The others managed to escape, leaving their equipment behind. The attack took place at 0850 the day before yesterday. At the same time, the LTTE launched simultaneous attacks on Kinnaiyadi and Kiran military camps in Batticaloa District on the night of the previous day. Reports say that the LTTE carried out the offensive with mortars and small arms and that one soldier was killed and six others injured.

Four innocent Tamil children were blown to pieces in missile attacks carried out by the Sri Lankan Government terrorists at Tikkodai in Amparai District. This outrageous act took place last Saturday. The children, who were playing in the courtyard of their house, became the target of the fanatical troops of the Chandrika Kumaratunga government. The four children were reported to be below 12 years of age.

Two Tamil laborers working on trucks transporting gravel were shot dead by the fanatical Sri Lankan troops at Kanniyai in Thirumalai [placename as transliterated] District. The troops shot the two laborers dead after making them kneel down. Two more civilians were also

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killed in this act of frenzy. The killed civilians were: 27-year old Arumugam Subramaniam, who was the father of two children, and 31-year old Subbaiah Rajendran, the father of four children. At the same time, Sri Lankan troops shot dead a civilian at Sittandiyadi [placename as transliterated] in Batticalia District.

The Sri Lankan Government is forcibly resettling civilians back to their homes from Trincomalee city, where they had moved to from Kuchchaveli and Nilaveli localities, dreading the acts of terrorism and ethnic cleansing being committed by the Sri Lankan troops and the home guard. These civilians were forcibly put on military vehicles and dropped at Kuchchaveli and Nilaveli localities. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has condemned these acts of coercion.

Christian Michael's Institute, a research organization based in Norway, today held a seminar entitled: Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and the Responsibility of the International Community. The seminar held under the auspices of the Norwegian Government was attended by the deputy foreign minister of Norway and Norwegian MP (Erna Sulberg). The seminar was also attended by Sarath Arumugam, the United National Party MP; Jegan Perera, a member of the Sarvodaya Organization and journalist; and Rudrakumar, one of the political advisers of the LTTE. No one from the government side was invited to the seminar. About 150 people comprising members of nongovernmental organizations as well as individuals attended the seminar. Rudrakumar, who stated that a solution to the ethnic conflict can be found only by going beyond the peace package put forward by the Sri Lankan Government, has also emphasized that a solution is possible only on the basis of Tamil nationalism. In his speech, the Norwegian deputy foreign minister stated that if the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE agree, the Norwegian Government is willing to assist in the efforts for a peaceful solution. Norwegian MP (Erna Sulberg) who spoke at the seminar called for a withdrawal of assistance to the Sri Lankan Government. Meanwhile, Buddhist monks held a mammoth protest demonstration in front of the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo. A petition was also submitted to the embassy at the end of the demonstration held to condemn the Norwegian Government's assistance to the LTTE.

Thank you.

Sri Lanka: Normal Financial Activities Resume at Central Bank

BK0103051396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The governor of the Central Bank, A.S. Jayewardene, says that over 100 central banks throughout the world have pledged assistance to bring the activities of the Sri Lanka Central Bank to normal. Even Central Bank in South America, with whom Sri Lanka does not have any connection, has pledged support. A large number of countries condemned the attack on the bank. Britain has agreed to train officers to set up the library again.

All financial activities at the Central Bank have returned to normal. The governor said that action has been taken for the reconstruction of the bank building. Local and foreign engineers are of the opinion that reconstruction could be effected, and further investigations are being carried out.

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